

# Halesowen CHRONICLE



Thursday, December 14, 2017

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## NURSERY IS RATED 'INADEQUATE' OVER SAFETY OF CHILDREN



Tiger Lily Day Nursery in Lutley Lane, Halesowen

A NURSERY in Halesowen has been rated 'inadequate' by education watchdog Ofsted after inspectors found 'children's safety was not assured'.

Ofsted also discovered issues with the quality of education at Tiger Lily Day Nursery in Lutley Lane during the inspection carried out in November. It marked a drop in performance from the previous inspection in April, where inspectors rated the nursery as 'requiring improvement'.

The nursery has declined to comment. Ofsted gave the nursery steps it must follow to improve after finding the nursery was inadequate – the lowest rank possible – for the categories of 'effectiveness of the leadership and management' and 'personal

development, behaviour and welfare'. For 'quality of teaching, learning and assessment' and 'outcomes for children', Ofsted said the nursery 'required improvement'.

But Ofsted did praise the nursery for the strong relationships its staff forged with children, for supporting their well-being and keeping parents informed.

The nursery was set up in 2010. It provides education for children aged two to four and employs 19 staff.

The inspection found issues with safety. Ofsted said: "Children's safety is not assured. Leaders do not take all reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised persons entering the premises."

Inspectors also found safety risks in the

environment, reporting: "Leaders and staff do not use risk assessment adequately to help identify, minimise and remove risks to children. This relates to the windows on the ground floor, suitability of some activities undertaken and risks associated with staff working on their own."

Another area which needed improving was the system around covering staff absences.

Ofsted said the steps the nursery must now take include ensuring all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unauthorised persons entering the building; to ensure children are not exposed to risk; and to improve the quality and range of activities on offer.

### CRIME

## Nearly 250 firearms handed in to police

MORE than 240 weapons have been handed in to West Midlands Police following a two-week firearms surrender.

More than 100 working firearms – including rifles, shotguns, revolvers and handguns – were handed in during the campaign last month.

Silencers, starting pistols, air weapons and two deactivated machine guns – including an AK47 and a 'Tommy Gun' – were taken into stations across the force area. The weapons and potential weapons will all now be destroyed.

As part of the campaign officers wrote to suspects urging them to switch to the 'straight and narrow' and called on family members to report those involved in crime.

### COUNCIL

## Snowbuster packs aim to boost safety

A WINTER warmth scheme led by Dudley Council is offering free snowbuster packs to residents.

The packs contain a snow shovel, high visibility jacket, five-litre bag of salt and a salt spreader.

Dudley councillor Laura Taylor said: "We are keen to help our communities keep residents safe." Call (01384) 817086 to request a snowbusters pack or for advice on staying warm at home.

### ROADWORKS

## Temporary traffic lights on busy route

ROADWORKS that have got under way on a busy route in Blackheath will last until after Christmas.

Motorists have been warned of possible delays on Horner Road in Blackheath, near the Sainsbury's store, and at the junction with Long Lane until December 29.

Temporary traffic lights are in place as road safety measures are being installed.

### INSIDE

## THE BOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN



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# Doctor crisis sparks proposal to merge services CLOSURE AT TWO GP SURGERIES

TWO doctors' surgeries will be closed and their services brought under one roof in a move experts say has been enforced by a 'crisis' in general practice.

Tenlands Road Surgery and Coombswood Surgery in Halesowen will be shut and patients sent to the town's health centre instead, under the plans which are going out to consultation.

Patients who use both surgeries have been informed of the proposed changes, which doctors said are necessary to ensure a service can continue to be provided safely.

In a letter to patients Dr Ruth Hearn, from Stourside Medical Practice, which runs the surgeries, said: "General practice in the UK is in a state of crisis."

"According to NHS England figures, 92 practices closed in 2016. While 34 merged with other practices, the remainder shut completely. This meant 265,000 patients had to register with a new practice."

### Ensure

"We would like to ensure that the service we offer is safe and stable and that we take the necessary steps to ensure that we are not at risk of closure."

"After a great deal of thought and consideration, we feel this is best achieved by bringing our services together under one roof."

"Subject to the outcome of the consultation process, and the decision of Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group, we would like to transfer all our services from Tenlands Road and Coombs Road surgeries to Halesowen Health Centre."

Dr Hearn said money saved from run-

### Report by Richard Guttridge

ning two sites would be spent on providing an extra GP on one day a week.

She also said there had been instances where a doctor had to react to a medical emergency alone and that practice leaders were keen to have more people on duty.

Health professionals are keen to hear the views of patients in a consultation that will run until January 22. Patients have been assured they will not need to change doctors.

The GP staffing crisis has led a health boss to suggest that refugees and asylum seekers could be trained to become GPs.

The refugees and asylum seekers with clinical training would need five years of training and have to pass clinical and language tests, as well as having GP training, said Andy Williams, lead for Black Country Sustainability and Transformation Partnership

## Lucky escape for lorry driver on M5



This lorry hit a barrier on the M5, near Halesowen, but the driver escaped serious injury Picture: CMPG A LORRY jack-knifed after smashing into a barrier on the M5 near Halesowen, forcing a stretch of the motorway to be closed for more than five hours.

Motorists faced delays following the accident on the southbound carriageway between junctions three, for Halesowen, and four for Bromsgrove

on Tuesday morning. The stricken lorry was left blocking three lanes and part of its cab had been separated due to the impact, lying next to it on the ground. Debris was also scattered across the motorway.

The lorry driver was not seriously hurt.

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# Trolley good effort by former Goodyear staff



**Celebrating a Good-year effort – trolley loads of food bought by former Goodyear workers at Blakemore Wholesale Unit, in Wolverhampton**

FORMER Goodyear workers have been spreading some festive cheer by handing over a massive donation of £2,000 worth of food and toiletries to our Feed A Family This Christmas appeal.

This incredibly generous gift of more than 2,500 items will go towards helping families and individuals in need across the Black Country.

Trolleys were loaded with everything from tins of vegetables, noodle pots and pasta to bottles of squash, long-life milk and jars of coffee. There was also an array of sweet treats including chocolate selection boxes for youngsters and vital toiletries including toothbrushes, shampoo and deodorant.

Families with babies were also included with much-needed donations of nappies and wipes among the items donated by the Goodyear workers 5/344 Transport and General Workers Union Benevolent Fund. Bosses at Blakemore Wholesale in Wolverhampton also helped.

It's almost 12 months since production finished at Goodyear but chairman of the Unite branch Cyril Barrett said workers were still very much committed to helping the community.

# Bishop's blessing



Cycling legend Hugh Porter has been backing the appeal



Rug trader Doris Bradbury makes her contribution to the Feed A Family collection point at Anne Franks's pop up charity stall at Cannock market

**THE Bishop of Dudley has spoken of the terrible struggles faced by families who are finding it difficult to put food on the table.**

The Right Rev Graham Usher says he is aware of one heart-breaking example where a father had to ask his daughter to choose between celebrating her birthday or Christmas.

Thankfully, a food bank came to the rescue so that she could have both a birthday gift and be able to enjoy the festive season. The Bishop shared the story as he donated food towards the Express & Star and Chronicle's Feed A Family This Christmas appeal, which is aiming to help hundreds of families



**Bishop of Dudley, Graham Usher** and the vulnerable across the Black Country and Staffordshire. And time is running out for donations, with the appeal finishing on Saturday.

He said: "Christmas is for many of us a wonderful time of family gatherings and eating and drinking too

much. It is rightly a time of joy and celebration. Amidst the fairy lights and tinsel that surround us there are families trying to live with difficult choices. Hard working families on low incomes who are struggling to make ends meet. Refugees who are confused having fled their homes. Elderly people who are frequently lonely.

"In recent weeks I've heard of women in a local refuge who, having fled domestic violence, applied for Universal Credit and have no money as they await the result."

The Bishop asked others to join him in supporting the Feed A Family appeal, joining a host of other notable Midlandsers including Wolverhampton cycling legend Hugh Porter, who has also backed the appeal.

We are asking for gifts of festive

food, such as mince pies, chocolates and Christmas puddings, as well as basics like canned goods, long-life milk, fruit juice, pasta and rice.

Non-food items such as toiletries, baby supplies, new socks and small presents are also welcome during the appeal.

Meanwhile, generous members of the public have donated to Cannock market, at trader Anne Franks's pop-up stall.

Anne sells a variety of items each week for a different charity and has used this month to support the Feed A Family campaign. Customers and fellow traders have also given cat and dog food to ensure pets don't go without either. Anne said: "Everyone has been very kind."

# Merry Hill owner intu is bought in £3.4bn deal

SHOPPING centres group Hammerson is to take over rival intu, owner of the Merry Hill shops complex at Brierley Hill, in a £3.4 billion deal that will create Britain's biggest property company.

The boards of Hammerson, which already owns The Bullring and Grand Central in Birmingham, and intu, which also owns Lakeside in Essex and Manchester's Trafford Centre, have agreed the offer by Hammerson to buy all intu shares.

Hammerson is also leading development of a new shopping complex on a 12-acre former foundry site on Bromford Road in Oldbury.

The deal will create a £21bn shopping centres giant.

The offer represents a value of approximately 253.9p per intu share, equivalent to £3.4bn.

The combined group, which will be called Hammerson, will be led by Hammerson boss David Atkins and chaired by David Tyler. John Whitaker, deputy chairman of intu, will become deputy chairman of the enlarged group and John Strachan, chairman of intu, will join the board as senior independent director.

The group overall will have six directors nominated by Hammerson and four directors nominated by Intu. Hammerson will continue to use the intu consumer brand within its shopping centre portfolio.

# Man shot in raid by masked gang

MASKED robbers shot one man and hit another over the head during a raid in Dudley last week.

West Midlands Police launched an investigation after the break-in on Tuesday afternoon (December 5).

A police spokesman said a gang wearing masks are believed to have forced their way into a property on Cromwell Street, Kates Hill, just before 3pm. Inside, one man was shot and another was struck over the head.

Both were taken to hospital with injuries that were not thought to be life threatening.

Police said it was believed to have been a targeted attack and police enquiries to trace the raiders were continuing.

Anyone with information call 101.

# Christmas past

A FESTIVE exhibition looking at Christmases past is being held at Dudley Archives and Local History Centre, Tipton Road, until the end of December. It features photographs and memorabilia. Free entry.

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# Hospital is still failing to hit the A&E target

RUSSELLS Hall Hospital is still failing to meet Accident & Emergency waiting time targets – but is not performing as badly as other hospitals in the region.

One in 10 patients were kept waiting longer than four hours to be seen at the Dudley hospital during October, as 90.1 per cent were seen on time. It means the Dudley Group NHS Trust, which runs the hospital, is still failing to meet the national 95 per cent target that has been set by the Government.

But its A&E performance is better than NHS trusts in Sandwell, Walsall and Staffordshire. All Black Country NHS trusts are falling short of the Government target in latest figures, which have been released looking at the percentage of people seen within four hours

## City

While the University Hospitals of North Midlands, which runs County Hospital in Stafford and Royal Stoke in north Staffordshire, was ranked the third worst in the country.

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, which runs Sandwell General Hospital and City Hospital, hit 85.4 per cent, down from 87.9 per cent in September. Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust, which runs Walsall Manor Hospital, is 82.8 per cent, up from 81.8.

# 10 burglary and break-in arrests

TEN burglary suspects have been arrested by West Midlands Police as part of a weekend crime crackdown across the region.

The suspects, aged between 15 and 41 years old, have been taken into custody for offences ranging from a school break-in to a house burglary.

Officers arrested two men aged 18 and 26 on suspicion of stealing TVs from a house in Stourbridge Road, Dudley.

A 36-year-old man was also arrested on suspicion of taking meat from Farm Foods, Wednesbury.

Five youths, aged from 15 to 17, were arrested during the early hours of Monday morning following reports of a burglary at Rosslyn School, Hall Green.

# Showaddy show

ROCK and roll stars Showaddywaddy will perform in Brierley Hill next year. They will play their 1970s hits at Brierley Hill Civic Hall on May 5 from 8pm. Tickets £20, see bhilliciv.co.uk.

# Bogus caller is caught on CCTV camera



Police want to speak to this man

POLICE have released CCTV images of a man they want to speak to after a bogus caller tricked his way into a Halesowen pensioner's home.

The man called at a property in Carters Lane saying he was there to collect VAT for some recent repairs.

The 82-year-old homeowner let him inside, as he owed a company some cash for fixing his roof earlier in the autumn.

But the suspected would-be con-man was forced to leave the house empty-handed after his intended

victim questioned the amount quoted.

Home CCTV installed at the property caught the suspect on camera and the tech-savvy pensioner handed the footage over to police at once, following the incident on November 8.

## Vulnerable

Detective Constable Sean Lowe said: "The attempt to defraud this individual had some level of planning behind it and had the homeowner been more vulnerable the

person responsible may well have been successful in stealing hundreds of pounds.

"Thankfully that is not the case but I'm concerned that this individual may seek to target other more vulnerable members of the community."

Anyone with information is asked to contact DC Sean Lowe via email s.lowe@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk or they can contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or at crimestoppers-uk.org quoting 20DY/247607J/17.

# Winter weather makes it snow go across borough

**HEAVY snowfall at the weekend brought early festive cheer to thousands of youngsters, especially when they got Monday and Tuesday off school.**

It was less fun for the commuters who had to make perilous homeward journeys on Friday or those who had to dig themselves out for a slip-sliding journey to work on Monday morning.

The winter wonderland meant cancellations and chaos for many with bus and train services severely restricted, but consolation was enjoyed by many families going sledging and snowman-making.

The region's attractions were closed at the weekend and early in the week, until roads became more passable on Tuesday and a thaw set in on Wednesday.

The Black Country Living Museum was closed on Sunday and the museum was contacting those who had booked for the Santa Hunt. The Santa Jog that was due to be held in Mary Stevens Park in aid of the hospice on Sunday had to be called off but has been rescheduled for Sunday.

## Shell

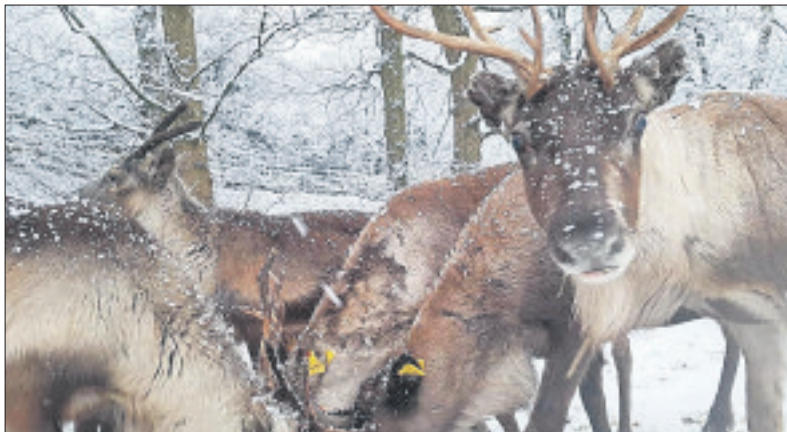
Residents in Halesowen made the most of the snow by recreating a shell memorial, that is planned for Shell Corner, out of snow.

The frozen sculpture, which has the message 'lest we forget' and a soldier silhouette carved into it, took three hours and 45 minutes to create. It pays tribute to the new monument that will be installed in the area, a project led by Councillor Stuart Henley, which replaces one that gave the area its name until it disappeared decades ago.

Dudley Zoo, which closed on Friday, remained shut over the weekend, citing the welfare of their animals and the health and safety of staff and visitors. Refunds and alternative dates are available.

The site may have been closed but it was business as usual for zoo keepers who had to transport supplies across the 40-acre grounds. Some used sledges to help move food around the Castle Hill site to care for the 1,600 animals.

Veteran comedian Sir Ken Dodd's performance at the Wulfrun Hall was also postponed but the 90-year-old's show has been re-arranged for December 21. Contact the venue for further details.



Santa's on his way – the reindeer at Dudley Zoo were cared for but the zoo was closed to the public



Snow shell – decorated snow sculpture in Halesowen



Narnia? No, Dudley in the snow last weekend

## NEWS IN BRIEF

# Twice the value in town calendar

A TWO-YEAR calendar featuring paintings and photographs of Dudley has gone on sale.

Proceeds from the 2018/2019 calendar will go to the Mayor of Dudley Councillor Dave Tyler's chosen charities – Dudley Mind, Dudley Alzheimer's Society and the Black Country branch of the YMCA.

It has been put together by mayoral ambassador Sue Randle and features paintings from Black Country artist Graham Colbourne and photographs from students at Dudley College.

Call Sue Randle on 07412 531924 or email suzylimesrdc@hotmail.co.uk to order a copy of the £10 calendar.

# Football legend inspires thesis

A DESCENDANT of football icon Duncan Edwards has been awarded a PhD after conducting a seven-year study into her famous relative.

Gayle Rogers did not have to look too far for her subject of her thesis, investigating how Edwards had been commemorated since his death following the 1958 Munich Air Disaster.

Gayle, 49, who like Edwards grew up in Dudley, under took seven years of research which incuded interviews with fans and family. She received her PhD from the University of Central Lancashire in Preston on December 5.

# Switch apparently switched for Daz

A MOTHER from Dudley was left shocked after ordering a £300 games console for her son on Cyber Monday – only to receive a box of washing powder instead. Paediatric nurse Charlotte Moore, 30, says she ordered the Nintendo Switch for £301.99 as her six-year-old son's Christmas present. When the parcel arrived the mother-of-two thought she better check and found it contained a £4 box of Daz washing powder. It looked as if the parcel had been tampered with then resealed. Amazon said it would be replaced.

# Thieves don't quit during festive season

RESIDENTS across Dudley borough have been urged to be vigilant to stay safe from bogus callers and from burglars over the festive season.

Dudley Council partnership service Living Well, Feeling Safe is highlighting the risks. Police have encouraged people to lock both their front and back doors, even when at home, use a door chain and always ask for identification. Don't leave valuables on show – including presents.

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# Top comedian cancels tour due to 'family circumstances'

COMEDIAN Peter Kay has cancelled his upcoming tour – set to come to Birmingham next year – due to 'unforeseen family circumstances'.

The Bolton comedian this afternoon released a statement, stating: "Due to unforeseen family circumstances I deeply regret that I am having to cancel all of my upcoming work projects.

"This unfortunately includes my upcoming stand-up tour, Dance For Life shows and any outstanding live work commitments. My sincerest apologies. This decision has not been taken lightly and I'm sure you'll understand my family must always come first. "I've always endeavoured to protect my family's privacy from the media. I hope that the media and the public will continue to respect our privacy at this time. Once again I'm very sorry."

## Firefighters' fun song has a serious aim

FIREFIGHTERS in Quinton have given their own twist to a Christmas classic in a bid to get people to test their smoke alarms.

Singing new words to Wham! festive favourite Last Christmas, firefighters at Woodgate Valley Fire Station are urging people to make sure they are prepared in case of a fire.

Three firefighters appear in the video, with their comrades off camera hurling snow balls at them, while a lead singer croons his unique version of the hit.

He says: "Last Christmas, we gave you an alarm. But the very next day, you took the battery away. This year, to keep you safe, we are going to give you something special." He adds: "Our smoke alarms have a 10 year battery, and can't be taken out, please test them out once a week." His colleague holds up a poster with the number 08003895525."

The comedian was set to play at Birmingham's Genting Arena on April 21 to 23 and 27 to 28 and May 1, 2 and 5 to 7. He was also set to play on Arena Birmingham on May 24 and 25, 2019.

The NEC Group issued a statement saying: "If customers have bought their Genting Arena or Arena Birmingham show tickets through The Ticket Factory, their refund will automatically be applied to their purchasing card for the total value of the tickets and fees. The team will be working hard to process these within the next 48 hours, however we are advising customers to allow at least an extra five working days for their bank to process this before contacting the Ticket Factory team direct.

"If customers bought ticket from another ticket agent, we advise they contact their original point of purchase with their order number."

## Statue of 'British Schindler' under way



The statue of Frank Foley sitting on a bench in the park, inset, hero Frank Foley

WORK has started on a statue honouring a hero dubbed the 'British Schindler'.

Artist Andy de Comyn has begun modelling the statue of Frank Foley, who repeatedly risked his life to save thousands of Jews in Nazi Germany.

Major Foley, who retired to Stourbridge and is buried in the town, worked at the British Embassy in Berlin before the Second World War.

He provided thousands of Jewish families with the documents they needed to escape Germany during the 1930s by bending the rules when stamping passports or issuing visas.

He also hid Jews in his own home and even went into Sachsenhausen concentration camp with visas to enable prisoners to leave.

### Park

The memorial to Major Foley will be in Mary Stevens Park, close to his former home in Eveson Road and the cemetery where he is buried. It is due to be unveiled in June.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin led the campaign for a permanent tribute, persuading then Chancellor George Osborne to stump up £40,000 to cover the costs. Mr Austin said: "I am absolutely delighted that work has started and the statue should be ready next summer so people can learn about him and our country's role in fighting for freedom, democracy and tolerance against Nazi Germany."

## Man died after being found in canal

A MAN has died after he was found in a canal in Rowley Regis.

Emergency services were called to the canal in Powke Lane just before 7pm last Wednesday.

The man in his 70s was found having a cardiac arrest and taken to hospital by paramedics, but died a short time later.

Police said the man's family have been notified and the death is not being treated as suspicious.

A spokesman said: "Police received a 999 call from a member of the public just before 7pm reporting a body in a canal near Powke Lane.

"The body was identified as a local man, understood to be in his 70s, and his death is not being treated as suspicious. His family has been notified and the matter passed to the coroner."

### Hospital

A West Midlands Ambulance Service spokesman said: "West Midlands Ambulance Service can confirm that it was called by the police to reports of a man in the canal just off Powke Lane.

"Two ambulances, a paramedic officer and the trust's Hazardous Area Response Team attended.

"The man was found in cardiac arrest and ambulance staff commenced advanced life support on scene.

"He was taken by land ambulance on blue lights to Russells Hall Hospital whilst CPR continued en route.

"Sadly, despite their best efforts, nothing could be done to save the man and he was confirmed dead a short time later at hospital."

## Folk star in concert

FOLK music star Eliza Carthy & The Wayward Band are in concert at Birmingham Town Hall on Monday evening. See [www.thsh.co.uk](http://www.thsh.co.uk) or call 0121 780 3333.

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## Inquest opens into death of missing man

AN INQUEST into the death of a 43-year-old Stourbridge man whose disappearance sparked a major nationwide search has opened.

The South Staffordshire Coroner has opened the inquest into the death of Matthew Gill, who was known to many by the nickname Liggy.

Mr Gill, who was found dead on land off Prestwood Drive, near Stourton, had been missing from his Stourbridge home since October 6.

The cause of death has been recorded as hanging.

The disappearance of the Kidderminster B&Q employee sparked a search which saw football clubs – including Albion and Wolves – and businesses offering their help.

A huge online appeal was also launched, with the Facebook page FindLiggy gaining more than 9,000 followers.

But the search came to a tragic end when Mr Gill's body was found on the afternoon of Sunday November 26 close to where his car, a silver Smart Roadster, had been found earlier in the search.

The inquest was adjourned and a provisional date of March 6 has been given for the full inquest.

## Recreating the night Dickens came to Brum

MORE than 150 years ago Charles Dickens visited Birmingham to give his first ever public reading of A Christmas Carol.

That December night in 1853 will be conjured up by actor Clive Francis when he recreates A Christmas Carol By Charles Dickens at the same venue, Birmingham Town Hall, on Sunday at 8pm.

Tickets start from £12.50, see [www.thsh.co.uk](http://www.thsh.co.uk) or call 0121 780 3333.

# Bungling burglar caught after leaving a tell-tale shoe print

## Freezing dog was hours from death



A rescue charity is appealing with donations to help pay hefty vet bills for abandoned dog Elsa's care

VOLUNTEERS are appealing for help to pay crucial vet bills which could bring an abandoned dog back from the brink.

The Animal House Rescue Charity has taken on the care of a Dogue de

Bordeaux they named Elsa. She was found frozen and near death at Corngreaves Nature Reserve in Cradley Heath.

The dog is now being cared for by YourVets in Smethwick but help is

needed with substantial vet bills. The dog, supposed to weigh around 45 kilos, currently only weighs 17 kilos.

Anyone who can help with a donation is asked to call 0121 4223709 or 07989 284683.

A BUNGLING burglar who left a tell-tale shoe print behind during a Cradley Heath break-in has been jailed for two years and four months.

Damien Pearsall left a muddy print on the floor while stealing a £2,000 computer, £400 mobile phone and the keys to a van.

The print displayed the distinctive pattern of the sole of an Adidas trainer, said Mr David Bennett, prosecuting.

The raid took place at an address in Station Road, Cradley Heath, on October 24, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

The 30-year-old criminal also left a spot of blood while breaking glass by a door and forensic checks matched it with his DNA.

### Alarm

Pearsall and an accomplice, who has not been identified, set off an alarm during the burglary on the unoccupied address and were seen by neighbours fleeing to a Mazda getaway car with false plates.

Six days earlier he had escaped with three watches, a laptop and jewellery from a semi in Dudley Road, Rowley Regis. During that raid he broke in through a rear door but was filmed by CCTV cameras at the property that clearly showed him wearing the tell-tale trainers.

The shoes were found at his home along with one of the watches stolen during the first break in.

Mr Simon Williams, defending, said Pearsall had a drug problem and had been made to take part in the burglaries to pay off a debt.

Pearsall, from Moor Street, Wednesbury, whose previous convictions involved 27 offences, pleaded guilty to both burglaries.

## Stour salmon project now has website

A WEBSITE has been set up to support the Salmon in the Stour project.

The four-year project aims to improve the River Stour and all its tributaries for both wildlife and people.

The project is being co-ordinated by the Severn Rivers Trust, Environment Agency, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and the Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country.

A picture of what needs to be done is currently being built up. Some of the targets include removing barriers to fish migration, re-naturalising artificial banks, tackling the spread of invasive species and identifying and resolving sources of pollution.

The Stour, which passes through Halesowen, was once an important industrial watercourse and has been heavily modified by man.

Go to the [severnriverstrust.com/projects/salmon-in-the-stour](http://severnriverstrust.com/projects/salmon-in-the-stour) website for further details.

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## IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



# Food critic needs to Shed his prejudices

YEARS ago, a long-haired food critic named Jay Rayner gave his verdict on the culinary tastes of Black Country folk. His summary is best described as withering.

He said there was not a single good place to eat in the Black Country "because the local population doesn't want good food." A bit harsh, I thought, but at the time put it down to regional differences in taste. With the proviso, of course, that cosmopolitan liberal London tastes are superior to those of the rest of the country.

What Mr Rayner did not really express, though, was what his precise taste was. He told us he didn't like cow pie from a pub in Netherton, which he said was "not quite the a\*\*\*hole of the world, but bloody close". But he didn't say what type of food he did like. Well he has now.

Recently he took to Twitter to share his thoughts on an achingly trendy new restaurant in south London called The Shed. He opined: "At last: a restaurant that recognises food is all about mood. Of all the shed-based experiences out there this one sounds like the best."

He added he was very keen to try out a dish called "Contemplation", which looked delightful in the soft-focus pictures on the restaurant's website.

The Shed was, in fact, a wind-up. It was created by a chap called Oobah Butler to highlight the absurdity of the people who rave about supposedly cutting-edge food, and the perils of reading too much into online reviews. "Contemplation", like his other dishes "Empathetic" and "Comfort" were mocked up using such delightful ingredients as shaving foam, household paint, plus a couple of toilet blocks to give it that special je ne sais quoi.

For what it's worth, I think Mr Rayner is wrong. People in the Black Country appreciate good food. It's just that it would take more than a few pretentious words about "mood" to persuade us to eat the contents of the bathroom stool.

That said, if anyone fancies a whip-round to help Mr Rayner achieve his dream of tasting Contemplation, I'd be delighted to chip in.

□□□

IT'S here. It's official. You can always tell when the Christmas celebrations have started in earnest when you get the first reports of the Christmas grottos that don't quite live up to the make-believe expectations.

One of the first off the block was the one at Gracechurch Shopping Centre in Sutton Coldfield, where Father Christmas failed to show up because he had been caught in snow. Elf 'n' safety, one presumes.

## Yobs now believe that the courts can't harm them



Pamela Stephenson – spoke frankly about her friendship with the royals



Prince Harry – it is said he knew he should wed somebody from showbiz



Christine Keeler – virtually impossible for parents to protect today's children

# CCTV holds no fear for all these thugs

THE most chilling CCTV footage of the week shows two thugs on a Tube train in London. They attacked a young man, half-strangled him in a headlock, took his mobile phone and threatened to stab him until he "apologised" for being gay. What made this incident so shocking was not the level of violence, nor even the hatred behind the attack. It was that these thugs must have known their faces would be caught on CCTV, and simply didn't give a damn. Were they out of their skulls on drugs, or made mad by religious fervour? Perhaps it's more likely that they are part of that vast feral army of youths who, having been caught and cautioned repeatedly by the police, have come to believe the law cannot harm them. CCTV was supposed to be a deterrent. It is not. The courts are supposed to be a deterrent. They are not. And as you look into the dead-eyed faces of those two yobs on the Tube, you can only pray your paths do not cross with theirs, for the cameras on the wall will not save you and the judges will not give you justice.

THE shop doorways seem fuller than ever with homeless sleepers. This is an existence which depends entirely on the generosity of people with spare cash. But the advent of contactless debit cards coupled with the plans to strip out thousands of high-street cash machines, as announced last week, means we may soon become a cashless society. And what then? "Any spare change, mate?" "No change at all, pal."

I WAS in a shop queue behind a woman who was buying 15 chocolate oranges. "It's the grandchildren," she gushed. "They all want an orange in their stockings." I guess it would be unfestive to point out that, despite the name,

## THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



a great fatty globe of milk chocolate laced with orange essence is not actually an orange. By way of comparison, an orange contains 87 calories, a chocolate orange about 800.

WE live in an age of entrepreneurs, chancers and wide boys. East of England Co-op has just started selling rice, crisps, pasta and other "dry goods" that have passed their best-before date for just 10p. Are they on eBay at 50p yet?

AND off to our first Xmas meal of the season, one of those events where you have to specify the menu in advance. Seriously, how many of us know, half way through November, whether, on a Sunday in early December, we might fancy chicken pate or prawns? One easy decision was to eliminate broccoli and Stilton soup from the equation. Broccoli and Stilton, for gawd's sake. Doesn't the very thought of it make you heave?

A FRIEND recalls another Stilton experiment that didn't quite work. On the menu in a country pub some years ago, mackerel with Stilton sauce looked strangely tempting. Turned out to be a curious blend of oily fish with that Stilton hint of damp, unwashed sports kit left in the locker all year. Well all I can say to that is Bon appetit.

IF the gossips are to be believed, Prince Harry said he knew he should wed somebody from showbiz just days before he met Meghan

Markle. Not because he wanted to meet someone glamorous but because celebrities and royals understand the pleasures and perils of fame and how to deal with them. This rang a bell. Ages ago, I interviewed Pamela Stephenson and she spoke very frankly about her and her husband Billy Connolly's friendship with the royals, notably Prince Charles. There was, she said, a common bond between the Windsors and the Connollys based simply on being famous and coping with the fans. And now she's Lady Connolly.

OUR changing language. Some long-term cannabis users in the States have reported unexplained episodes of screaming and vomiting. The condition has been named "scromiting."

CHRISTINE Keeler has died, aged 75. In the same week a major police operation against online sex stalkers revealed how it is virtually impossible for parents to protect today's children from the depravity of adults. Back in the 1960s, controlling your kids' access to the worldwide media was much simpler. I remember my father getting up early to hide the Daily Express, thus preventing us kids from reading a single juicy word about the Profumo Affair.

THE Great Puffin Conspiracy continues, this time on Blue Planet II (BBC1). It is rife among naturalists and its mantra is: "I can make my puffs look bigger than yours." Using zoom lenses, full-frame images and a lack of any means of comparison, puffs appear to be as big as turkeys. In real life as one wildlife tourism website warns its customers: "They are always smaller than people expect."

## TALKING POINT



# Why make such a meal over Christmas?

SCROOGE. Killjoy. Grinch. Party-pooper. These are just some of the comments I've had to endure over the years . . . and all because I'm not a fan of Christmas.

It seems just because I can't get carried away with the idea of buying overpriced presents for people who don't really want them, and don't find it easy to enter into the party spirit I'm a mean, curmudgeonly misery who doesn't want anyone to enjoy the festive season.

And yet nothing could be further from the truth. I love to see people looking forward to a fortnight of over-indulgence and slothfulness in the name of merriment. It's just that I don't really get why we all have to be involved.

Just this month, two things highlighted this divide in my eyes. The first was the annual discussion over when and where to have the office "do" and who to invite. Personally, I don't enjoy eating out, except when absolutely necessary. I get exasperated with the rigmorole of perusing the menu, waiting to order, and finally trying to attract someone's attention to get the bill. So that was that. I gave it a miss.

The second reminder was when one of my favourite radio programmes was cut by 15 minutes so the station could promote its Christmas charity appeal. I've got nothing against charity – I regularly send a large donation to my chosen good cause – but again I had the feeling that I was being browbeaten into making a gesture I'm not that wild about.

It set me thinking about a news article in which the idea of loneliness at Christmas was questioned. The report pointed out many people feel more lonely in the summer. It seems with all the activities going on outdoors, and relatives and friends away on holiday, a large proportion of the population living alone might prefer Christmas time, no matter how little attention they receive around now.

So, where does that leave us? My father used to say once the presents had been opened, and the turkey dinner polished off, that was Christmas over and done with for another year. In my view, he was right, especially in view of all the fuss and palaver in the "run-up to the big day" as the advertising industry likes to put it.

To sum up, I'll leave you with one of my favourite observations on Christmas which springs to mind every year. It came from comedy actress Goldie Hawn, who said "Why don't they move Christmas to July when the shops aren't so busy?"

It always make me smile, even though it might provoke a debate for another day. In the meantime, goodwill to you all.

STEVE PARLETT

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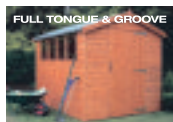
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# Boundary changes would rip Dudley apart

HAVING failed to put Halesowen into a constituency with part of Birmingham, the Boundary Commission has now decided to tear apart Dudley leaving only part of the old borough in a constituency bearing its name, and dumping the other parts into constituencies outside the Dudley borough.

Half the town centre and Oakham would be ripped from their historic roots and transplanted into a constituency based around Smethwick. The other half, mostly Netherton, would be absorbed into Halesowen and Rowley Regis constituency.

Woodsetton and half of Old Park, just two miles from the town centre, together with Sedgley and Upper Gornal, would be separated into a constituency with Bilston and Coseley. This piece of mischief would create a constituency, comprising a significant part of Dudley borough, called Wolverhampton South & Coseley.

This would lead to the farcical situation of MPs, representing north and central Dudley, gathering in counting halls in Sandwell and Wolverhampton to hear their election results.

This is just plain wrong.

The only justification for this is to reduce the number of MPs and create similar sized constituencies – a principle selectively ignored in other parts of the country where it would upset the locals. But it's okay to break up the historic communities that make up Dudley, and give them to MPs who will struggle to understand and represent the local interests of its constituents?

Let's tell those fools at the Boundary Commission to back off, go back to the drawing board, and start again.

A A CROMPTON  
Dudley

## Steps view ruined by a wiggler

MYSELF, my daughter and granddaughter went along to the Arena Birmingham to see the group Steps perform.

Steps gave the performance of their lives. We thoroughly enjoyed it and the supporting act, Vengaboys, were really good also.

The only thing that spoilt it for me was a very selfish young lady sat directly in front of me.

When the music got to her she decided to stand up, wiggling her hips to the music and completely blocking my view of the group. After a while I politely asked her to sit. She wasn't very happy but eventually did so. However, this was repeated several times.

I had paid good money to see the show and wanted to be able to see what was going on. If you want to stand and dance around why not book tickets in the standing area?

MRS JEAN GREENHALL  
Kingswinford

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### POST

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story, write to The Editor, Chronicles, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

## If they can walk that far why the badge?

IN response to the two letters regarding parking opposite Russells Hall Hospital, I would like to add that if someone with a blue badge can walk the distance to the hospital and then round the hospital they probably aren't entitled to a blue badge anyway!

If an able-bodied driver has dropped them off then surely they should have to park in a normal parking space and not in a disabled parking place.

The same goes for shopping centres and supermarkets.

BARBARA BODDISON  
Kingswinford

## A second referendum is required

BREXIT negotiations continue to reveal facts that should have been revealed during the referendum.

It is becoming obvious that the 'Leave' campaign and the Government had either not thought through the consequences, or deliberately concealed the truth.

Throughout the negotiations the problem of the Irish border has been sidelined, as if it were a secondary item. On the contrary, it is fundamental.

It is now becoming likely that the Irish border may not be a physical border but a border on a map. If that should happen, our borders will be no more secure, possibly more vulnerable. That is not what the majority voted for. The EU will almost certainly support the Irish Republic on this issue. Should this be the case, then the referendum is fatally flawed and we should be allowed a second referendum.

MICHAEL CLIFF  
Wall Heath

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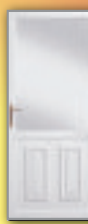


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Rescued dogs at the shelter in Romania



Stuart says hello to the canines they're helping



Stuart Sowden, left, and Paul Morris



At work on the kennels to make them winter-proof



The open kennels at the shelter in Bacau

# Duo work to protect dogs

**TWO generous Black Country businessmen have made a return journey to Romania to step in over the suffering of street dogs.**

Paul Morris and Stuart Sowden were so moved by the plight of the abandoned and abused dogs dumped on the streets that they offered to carry out vital work at a rescue shelter in Bacau.

Paul who runs Halesowen firm P&R Morson and colleague Stuart have been carrying out repairs at the

shelter including a new roof on the kennels. Despite having just flown back they are now planning another trip when they will look at the electricity at the cash-strapped dogs home.

They stepped in having heard about West Midlands-based Sadie's Stray Dog Rescue which has a shelter in Bacau working to rescue abandoned, abused and injured dogs that have been dumped on the streets. Once well enough, the team in the UK helps to find them new homes.

Friend Katie Hughes, from Hagley, adopted a rescue puppy called Nelly from the organisation and decided

she wanted to find out more about where her pet had come from so went to Bacau with pal Anna Hughes, from Stourbridge. They posted updates on social media which were seen by dog lovers Paul and Stuart.

Paul, who heads the mechanical and electrical contractors, said they knew then that they wanted to get involved and use their skills to help improve the shelter.

"It felt like the least we could do and we were soon hopping on a plane to Bacau ourselves," he added.

They first visited in October and inspected the shelter, determiniing

what best could be achieved in a week and ordered materials.

One of the biggest challenges was the winter weather in Romania which is harsh, reaching -25 in winter, and the kennels are all outside.

Paul and Stuart then returned recently and replaced the roof on around 20 dog pens - 60 metres in length.

ON his return, Paul said: "We do intend on visiting again to continue with the work. This will be when the weather has turned, around Easter time. We intend to continue with the roofing.

"We will look at installing a dedicated water supply and stand pipes along the full length of the shelter."

Before flying out, Paul had said: "This project is definitely going to be a challenge for us and very emotionally draining I'm sure, but we couldn't sit back and do nothing."

His wife Claudia has also been organising a fundraising appeal to buy new kennels.

For more information and to find out how you can get involved visit: [www.sadiesstraydogrescue.com](http://www.sadiesstraydogrescue.com) or join the Sadie's Stray Dog Rescue group on Facebook.

## Directors are in court over waste mountain

A COMPANY director has admitted offences relating to a mountain of waste at a Dudley industrial estate.

Brian McIntosh, aged 27, of Adams Hill, Bartley Green, Birmingham, a director at Mak Waste Ltd, pleaded guilty at Wolverhampton Magistrates' Court to knowingly causing the contravention of an environmental permit. It relates to a yard once operated by Rowanoak Waste in Shaw Road.

He appeared with Edward Boulton, 42, of Larkspur, Tamworth, also a director at Mak Waste, and Randle Hawkins, 58, of Quarry Bow, Upper Gornal, and Kevin Allan, 58, of Roundway Down, Perton, both directors at Rowanoak.

Boulton denies failing to comply with an environmental permit. Hawkins and Allan had yet to enter pleas. Boulton, Hawkins and Allan are due to appear at Wolverhampton Crown Court on January 4.

## MP Williamson says 'kill British jihadis'

BRITISH jihadis who fight for ISIS should be killed to make sure they never come back to the UK and pose a threat, South Staffordshire MP Gavin Williamson said.

The Kinver MP, who is the new Defence Secretary, has vowed to eliminate those intent on bringing 'destruction, death and bloodshed' to Britain.

He said: "My view is a dead terrorist can't cause any harm to Britain."

The MP said the armed forces were working 'right across the globe' to ensure jihadis are never able to come back to the UK.

But former director of public prosecutions, Lord Macdonald, said: "It simply will not be lawful in all circumstances to kill jihadis, as the Secretary of State seems to be suggesting. We can't simply say that everyone who has gone to Iraq will now be hunted down and killed. That's a juvenile response. It's not a serious, grown-up policy response for a senior British Government minister."

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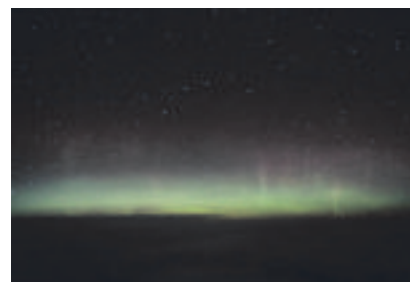
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## Sister pays tribute to victim of house fire



**Gary Gooding, 42, from Netherton, could not be revived after he was found in his burning house**

THE victim of a house fire thought to have been started by a lithium battery has been named as Gary Gooding.

The battery was on charge at the Blackbrook Road property in Netherton when the fire started, say investigators.

Emergency services were called at 6.10am on December 1 to the property where Mr Gooding, aged 42, was helped by firefighters but died at the scene.

His sister Carly Gooding took to Facebook to leave an emotional tribute and to warn others to beware of chargers as a potential fire hazard.

She said: "Our family will never be the same again but if we can save another family having to go through this pain we would like to remind and warn everyone to make sure their smoke alarms are working and also unplug all electricals when they go to bed."

"We can never bring our brother back but we don't want anymore lives lost through this tragic accident."

# Hospital is closing to create more home help

**A HOSPITAL specialising in mental health treatment will close following a shake-up of services in Dudley.**

Birch Day Hospital, on King Street, is being shut to make way for a new mental health service that will see patients treated at home.

The decision has been made by Dudley & Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, which believes the changes will make it easier for patients to get help.

A trust spokesman said: "We are working with patients and families to support them safely through the transition of care."

Careful consideration was taken over the closure, the trust says, and comes after a public consultation.

### Assessment

As part of the restructure, patients will be able to seek assessment every day of the week and will also be entitled to three visits a day from a carer.

The service is aimed at older people and has been given the go ahead by Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group.

**By Jamie Brassington**

The spokesman added: "Patients that require psychological interventions will still be able to access these services and we are exploring options to deliver these closer to home in the community."

"The new service will provide enhanced support for patients including a specialist older adult home treatment service, avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions. Alongside this, assessment for patients in the community will be extended to seven days a week."

The move will also see money set aside to create new mental health services for patients suffering with dementia, delivered via Dudley Dementia Gateways.

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Monday 25 December	Wednesday 27 December
Tuesday 26 December	Thursday 28 December
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Thursday 28 December	Saturday 30 December
Friday 29 December	Sunday 31 December
Monday 1 January	Tuesday 2 January
Tuesday 2 January	Wednesday 3 January
Wednesday 3 January	Thursday 4 January
Thursday 4 January	Friday 5 January
Friday 5 January	Saturday 6 January

2 days later than usual

1 day later than usual

[www.sandwell.gov.uk/bins](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/bins)

The tip at Shidas Lane, Oldbury, is open 8am-4pm every day. The only days it will close are Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Garden waste collections are having a break for the winter. There will be no green bin collections from 4 December 2017 until 23 February 2018.

To sign up to free email alerts for bins and recycling visit [www.sandwell.gov.uk/emailupdates](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/emailupdates)

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Metropolitan Borough Council

serco

**Collections will return to normal from Monday 8 January 2018**





Phil Timma and Natalie Baggott tuck into a burger at the BBQ



There was musical entertainment too



Ready to try the street food on offer in Stourbridge



Rock Choir members Pam Simpson and Mary Whitehouse in festive mood



Louisa Dovey with her illuminated bottles



Glasses of fzz for Jess Lowe, Becky Shaw and Michaela Loperis

# Food fair is festive success

**FAMILIES** braved the wintry conditions to enjoy a festival of street food and music in Stourbridge.

There was plenty of hot food to warm the cockles of those who turned out for the 'Street Food Affair' on Saturday, not to mention a drop of

mulled wine and sloe gin. More than 1,500 people turned out next to the canal at the Bonded Warehouse for the event which was organised by Sarah New.

She set up the venture last year and has not looked back with the food festival proving popular with Black Country visitors.

And rather than put people off, the snow helped turn the festival into a 'winter wonderland' and saw it take a Christmas market feel. Buskers were also on hand to keep spirits high.

Mother-of-two Sarah, aged 54, from Wordsley, said he was delighted with how the event went.

"It was fantastic. It turned into a winter wonderland," she said. "We must have had 1,800 people which, in the conditions, is brilliant."

"It was a huge success. A few stallholders weren't able to attend because they just couldn't get here but we had more than enough traders."

Sarah admits the turnout at her

events had defied her expectations and that she is excited for the future with more festivals planned for next year.

She said: "It is about bringing the community together and supporting local talent. We have got so much talent in Stourbridge and the Black Country."

## Faith leaders are opposing new boundary

FAITH leaders in Dudley are united in calling for a stop to boundary proposals that would split the town centre. St Thomas ward would be reassigned to a new Sandwell constituency, under Boundary Commissions proposals. This means a ward including Kates Hill, Buffery, Sledmere, Blowers Green and Oakham would not longer be represented by a Dudley MP. It would instead be part of a Sandwell constituency stretching from Dudley to Edgbaston. It would also see Dudley's town centre church of St Thomas's in a different constituency from the ward that has its name.

Christian, Muslim and Sikh faith leaders have objected. Rev Robert Barlow, Rector of Dudley, said: "The church has been changing its structures to make cooperation across the borough much easier, so these proposals couldn't come at the worst possible time." Palvinder Bains from The Guru Nanak Singh Sabha Gurdwara said: "We are appalled that these proposals clearly do not take in to consideration the needs of residents." Mr Mohammed Aurangzeb, chairman of Dudley Central Mosque, said: "I am really concerned that members of our community could have to travel all the way to the edge of Birmingham to see their 'local' MP."

## Lots to laugh about as comedians visit

THERE'S lots to laugh about in Wolverhampton with top comedy shows including controversial Russell Brand bring his Re:Birth show to the Civic Hall on Wednesday (December 20). Roy 'Chubby' Brown brings his politically incorrect gags to the Civic on December 21, then the venue hosts I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here's Joel Dommett on December 29, a show postponed from November. The Laugh Out Loud Comedy Club night is at Wolverhampton Art Gallery this Saturday with Scottish comedian Raymond Mearns.

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Wish you all Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

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 CHRISTMAS DAY: 12 noon-2pm  
 BOXING DAY: 11-6pm  
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Aniseed 70cl	£6.49
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Snow Ball (113ml x4) 2 Pack	£5.00
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Old Speckled Hen 500ml	} ANY 4 for £5.50
Enville Ale 500ml	
Batham's Bitter 500ml	£1.99 Each case of 8 bottles £14.99
	£1.99 each case of 12 bottles £20.99

## BOTTLED BEER

Coron Extra 330ml	8 for £7.00
Stella 330ml	8 for £6.00
Budweiser 300ml	8 for £5.50
	24 for £15.99
Peroni 620ml	2 for £4.00
Hop House 13 Lager 650ml	2 for £4.00
Stella 660ml	3 for £5.00

## BOTTLED CIDER

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Carlsberg Pint	} 4 CANS £3.99
Carling Pint	
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FLETCHERS  
 AT



# Deck the halls with vintage decorations

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

with John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips



WITH the festive season almost upon us many people will be busy decorating their homes – and so it's timely to remind you all that a number of vintage items make great decorations!

Candles of course play a vital role in creating that seasonal atmosphere and they can be housed in anything from silver candlesticks to pretty china cups.

Red and green candles are the obvious choice for the more formal holders and scented tea-lights might be placed in cups decorated with holly, berries and ivy.

China bowls can be used for potpourri, pine cones and fruit and actually look quite good heaped with brightly-coloured baubles.

Use vintage urns and planters for seasonal plants like poinsettia (although remember to keep these well away from cats as they are poisonous to them!) and

large vases for displays of greenery such as holly and ivy.

If you can find some, put Victorian or Edwardian Christmas cards on display with your modern ones and why not add some vintage toys, such as small dolls and teddies, to your present collection around the tree?

If you're lucky you can find some antique tree ornaments in good condition, the older ones are more difficult to track down

but it possible to find later ones still boxed and pristine (these kind of decorations tend to be well looked after and stored in their original boxes).

Again if you are fortunate you might also be able to find a 'snow baby'; these charming decorations date back to Victorian times and are delightful little model figures.

If you have the room and have one to hand (or can buy one) pile up your presents on a vintage sleigh – if you're lucky it may serve a dual purpose if we have a white Christmas this year!

• The Old Mill Antiques Centre, in Mill Street, Low Town, Bridgnorth is open seven days a week from 10am until 5pm. This year, for the first time ever, we are opening for late-night festive shopping until 8pm every Wednesday until Christmas and Charlie's Tea Rooms will be open at the same time. There is free parking for customers.

# Delight in creativity that simple things can bring



Coloured pencils – how many

I'VE just watched an advert on the television for a Parker pen. In the 1970s and 1980s these were the ultimate gift for achievements, good exam results, completing your degree or a new job.

A shiny cased, refillable writing implement with a stylised arrow pocket clip and a padded leather look box. It was an item of beauty.

Thirty plus years on and we rarely need a pen or pencil, the technology we carry acts as a notebook, journal or diary, immediate words written, saved and able to be sent at the touch of a button.

I love the mechanics of today's documentation but would miss the delight of pen and paper. My son would struggle to find a pencil in his house, it is not a necessary implement for today's society.

Our children do their homework on a laptop and the teacher works from an interactive whiteboard in the classroom. No longer will a secret handwritten note be passed around behind the teachers back, a text message will

## STYLE FOCUS

with Janet Timmis



appear on the recipient's phone instead.

I personally make lists, keep notebooks, write stories and draw and love to look back on the scribbles and words that remind me of specifics and create visual images.

I get amazing delight from purchasing new sketchpads, diaries and journals and complete excitement when I write in them for the very first time.

## Brain

I run a drawing group every week in Market Drayton and am thrilled by the ability of the members with only a pencil and sketchbook. A sense of achievement from the final picture and great fun too.

It helps with articulation and creativity and exercises different parts of the brain.

There are some fabulous products around this year which make wonderful Christmas

presents for anyone and everyone. Make up a package of brightly coloured sketch pads, diaries and project books with a colour theme or design from Wilco or B&M, add some shiny pencils, pens and character rubbers.

WH Smith has beautiful notebooks to suit any personality. You can buy list pads with rip off pages, journals with spaces for photos and keepsakes. The Works sell value art and paper products to keep any age happy.

Someone who loves to write would value a delightful boxed fountain pen and bottle of ink or a pen and pencil combination encased in wood or glass, online sellers such as Amazon and ebay have exciting offers and the gift company 'not on the high street' offer personalised and unusual handwriting gifts.

I embrace the new technology, the incredible changes that improve our lives, the fountain pen has been replaced by the Sharpie and brushes and canvas by a tablet screen but there is delight in the creativity of what the simple things can bring us.

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A glamorous setting featuring top picks from Debenhams, including Jasper Conran Round Decanter, £36; Silver Stag Christmas Candelabra, currently reduced to £24.50 from £35; Gold Metallic Napkins, currently reduced to £9.80 from £14 for set of four; Gold Beaded Napkin Rings, currently reduced to £11.20 from £16 for set of four; Canvas Home White Metallic Glazed Dauville Dinner Plates, £30 each, and also matching Bowls £15 each (all from Debenhams).

# How to lay on the festive style with a table setting



Gold and animal print make for a funky table setting: Leopard Print Dinner Set, currently reduced from £25 to £20; Glitter Stag Ornament, £5, George Home at Asda

THE festive season is almost upon us, which means it's time to step up to the table – and transform it into a stunning setting for the most important meal of the year.

Choose from a colour scheme of silver, gold or classic red and white (maybe with a dash of Highland tartan) for a Christmas table that will attract just as many compliments as the food.

We've already scouted out the best buys on the high street; all you need to do is choose your favourites, and then pop on some carols and set the scene...

## Set a silver shimmer

"Forget any minimalist tendencies and go all out with the glamour and sparkle this Christmas. Gold or silver are festive favourites, but this year, also consider introducing dark, moody tones," says Clare Harris, managing director at Talking Tables (talkingtables.co.uk). "A grey or even black tablecloth creates a dramatic backdrop, and shows off your table decorations more effectively than white. If you're going for a single colour, use a mix of textures and finishes."

"A collection of beautiful mercury glass

By Gabrielle Fagan

baubles moves a silver scheme from classic to contemporary, especially with the introduction of glittering disco balls.

"Surprise your guests by taking your table scheme in new directions," she adds. "Clusters of paper honeycomb, and pom-pom decorations hung overhead, are a new approach to table decorating, which saves crucial table space and elevates the setting."

## Go for glittering gold

"The Christmas table is an opportunity to go completely OTT and let your creative flair run wild. The whole day is about extravagance, indulgence and glamour, so I love to go a little crazy with the decorating," says Jenny Hurren, founder of Out There Interiors (outthereinteriors.com).

"The food is a beautiful sight in itself, but why not add some glitz and glamour to the proceedings and adorn the table with beautiful place settings, decorative touches and 'the decent' china?"

"My favourite is gold-painted twigs and foliage," adds Jenny. "Eucalyptus leaves look stunning with a touch of gold spray paint."

"Run a few sprigs along the middle of the table, intertwining them through glass stems, around dishes and bowls and dan-

gle them off the end. Use small bunches of them tied with ribbon and a named luggage label as a truly personal place setting.

"If you have the space, add a statement centre piece, such as a quirky gold pineapple, and team the whole look with fresh white linens and elegant glassware."

## Stay true to tradition

"Always start with a theme and keep to one or two key colours, and then build up the setting. Have in mind the general look you want to achieve, for example classic red and white, rustic, opulent or minimal," says Danielle Tolson, co-founder of Tolly McRae (tollymcræ.co.uk), specialists in luxury table linen, among other things.

"This year, I'll be using gold as the core theme, with dusky pink accents, and I'm going for an overall opulent effect."

"More is more as far as I'm concerned, and our table will be crammed with flickering candles, sparkling cutlery and glasses."

"For a centrepiece, a glass bowl filled with pine cones, baubles or even a foliage garland is effective."

"Alternatively, lightly spray fruit – pomegranates, pineapples and other exotic fruit – with gold paint and arrange in a clear glass bowl."

"Why not add a string of twinkling fairy lights?"



## Family are worried over missing man



Simon Smith, aged 50, from Brierley Hill, has been missing from his home since December 3

CONCERN is growing for the safety of a man who has not been seen for more than week.

Simon Smith, aged 50, from Brierley Hill was last seen on December 3.

Police said he had spent the day visiting family in the area but never returned home.

He has not made contact with family and friends since that day and they are said to be extremely worried about his safety.

Simon is described as white, 5ft 8ins tall, slim, with short curly brown hair. The last time he was seen, he was wearing blue jeans, a red jumper, black jacket, a black and green beanie hat and black trainers.

West Midlands Police have urged anyone who believes they may have seen him to call them on the non-emergency 101 number. Information can also be left with the Missing People charity on by calling 116 000.

## President of church has resigned in faith row

A SPIRITUALIST church president has stepped down after she was suspended over a row centred on a medium brought to the church.

Laraine Killarney was suspended from Stourbridge Spiritualist Church last month.

Spiritualists' National Union took the action following a complaint over medium Paul Brereton, who was allegedly invited to speak at a church meeting without being a member.

Union minister David Bruton said there was also complaints over the running of the church.

Ms Killarney had appealed against the decision, but had since resigned, according to Mr Bruton.

She said: I vehemently deny asking Paul Brereton to come to the church. We have an excellent committee but there are four or five on who are causing trouble. What is going on is completely against our faith.

"I am withdrawing from the church but not from my faith."

Kath Garrad has been appointed as acting presi-

By Alex Ross

dent of the church, which is based in Union Street.

Mr Bruton said: "The suspension came in following a complaint made.

"It was part of the procedure to suspend the individual as the investigation into the complaints takes place.

"One of the complaints about allowing someone to speak at the church AGM who was not a member. It was in relation to the fact that person had been declined to be a working medium at the church. That person was Paul Brereton."

The church holds services every Sunday, and in the week. Congregations can be as large as 200 and the church is one of the largest in the union.

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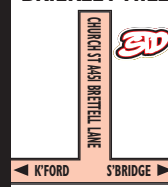
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# Enrich your habitat and help protect wildlife too

**PEOPLE'S Trust for Endangered Species (PTES), a UK conservation charity, has released its annual Christmas gift catalogue.**

The creative and quirky range of gift ideas will help the most endangered wildlife across Britain and throughout the world, with 100 per cent of profits going directly to help wildlife in need.

There are gifts to suit all interests varying from improving your own habitat with beautifully designed tea towels and cushions, to supporting conservation projects by giving snow leopards a safe place to roam.

There are also gifts for all budgets from wooden keyrings for £4.50 to original watercolour wildlife illustrations for £45. New items this year range from eco-friendly seedballs to original wildlife themed artwork exclusive to PTES so whether you want to save the bees or protect the pine martens, there is something for everyone.

The full range of wildlife gifts, ideal for anyone wild about wildlife, can be viewed and purchased online at [www.ptes.org/shop](http://www.ptes.org/shop).

**Gifts of Nature (prices range from £10 - £50)**

PTES has some unique gift ideas in their Gifts of Nature range. 100% of the money raised will help save endangered species worldwide. Gift options include:

Honeymoon hamper: providing newly released dormice with food until they can fend for themselves in the wild

Gardener's friend: encouraging the public to create hedgehog holes and connect their gardens to form Hedgehog Highways

Fighting for survival: educating more people in the conservation of stag beetles

Winter wonderland: supporting coppicing practices in ancient woodland to help species such as red squirrels and hazel dormice through winter and spring

Location, location, re-location: relocating the rare pine marten from Scotland to a new lush woodland home in Wales

Tails of the riverbank: helping save water voles in the UK and boost their numbers by improving their riverbank homes

Passage to India: working with villagers in India to plan agricultural work around elephant migratory routes & promoting alternative forms of livelihood

Save orangutan forest: training forest managers in Indonesia to help protect the Bornean orang-utan from extinction

Snow leopard patrol: creating new patrol zones across Mongolia so more snow leopards can roam free

Funky gibbon: training forest rangers to monitor and report illegal poaching of western hoolock gibbons and educating communities to respect this species

**Wildlife Guides & Publications**

For a comprehensive understanding of Britain's mammals in both the countryside and urban environments, PTES has two concise and beautifully illustrated guides so you can learn more about the wildlife living on your doorstep. Urban Mammals: A Concise Guide and Britain's Mammals: A Concise Guide are priced at £9.99 each or both for £15.00.

**Canvas shopping bag**

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Choose from: Mr Badger, Honey the Hedgehog, Rusty the Fox and Vintage Apple. Each fabulously designed notepad has 60 ruled pages. Each design reflects a love of wildlife and nature, and are priced at £3.50 each.

**Dormouse Christmas cards**

Exclusive to PTES, this delightful dormouse Christmas card is sure to make you want to curl up by the fire with a mince pie. Each card is 12.5 x 12.5cm and features the message "Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year". A lovely card to spread some Christmas cheer, and are priced at £4.50 for a pack of ten.



A Book That Takes Its Time, £21.99



Creators of Flow magazine, Irene Smit and Astrid van der Hulst



Remodelista: The Organized Home, £20

# Beautiful new books with pages of pure inspiration

**BOOKS are the perfect gift for Christmas and any time of year, they can be opened and enjoyed again and again.**

Workman Publishing has offered up a feast of new titles, with something to suit everyone's interest and tastes.

With interest growing in the concept of mindfulness, **A Book That Takes Its Time**, £21.99, offers plenty of food for thought.

This one-of-a-kind guide would be the perfect present for a loved one or for yourself. If you've not yet embraced the concept of taking pleasure in the simple things, the here and now and living 'in the moment', this book will take you on a mini mindfulness retreat.

A beautifully presented and very clever creation, it comes from the creators of Flow magazine, Irene Smit and Astrid van der Hulst who say: "We need more stillness, more downtime, more mindfulness. And that's what this book will bring you. In fact we invented something entirely new to do just that."

Each chapter is full of inspirational ideas to encourage you to make more time to learn, create, relax or simply breathe.

## Perspective

It's the perfect antidote to the manic festive season ahead, giving tips to help you worry less, feel more at peace and change your perspective.

It also offers solace in the dark and depressing post-Christmas lull, when it can be easy to fall victim to the January blues.

"Life is so much better when you enjoy living in the now, when you focus more on the beautiful moments and when you don't expect so much of yourself all the time."

There are hands-on activities such as crafts and journals, with stickers, postcards and decorative papers for collaging, enabling you to create a lovely keepsake. Instead of simply reading about the concept, you can actively take part and put its theories into practice.

This is not a traditional page-turner, this is a book that requires you to take your time, indulge and enjoy.

Also available from Workman Publishing is the **John Derian Engagement Calendar** priced at £16.99.

John Derian is an American decoupage artist and designer who transforms printed images from the past. His decoupage plates, platters, paperweights, coasters, and bowls are sold at upscale home stores, in catalogues, and at gift shops worldwide.

The planner pulls together 52 favourite John Derian images in a cross between a desk diary and a calendar, which is small enough to be carried with you.

There is a spread for every week of the year, decorated with all manner of interesting subjects such as anatomical prints,



Beautiful designs on every page – enjoy John Derian's eye for decoupage all year round



The John Derian Engagement Calendar

beetles and a long-lost love note. Together they constitute a beautifully designed and sophisticated product. It comes gift-boxed with a ribbon bookmark and would be the perfect addition to any desk, either at work or in the home office.

The quirky designs transport you to another world, where the imagination runs wild.

One-of-a-kind images are enhanced to create curious and fascinating pieces, from



More examples of John Derian's decoupage creations

pea-pod people to giant eyeballs. Finally, for those who need a little inspiration keeping their home or work space tidy, Workman Publishing has also released **Remodelista: The Organized Home**, £20, full of tips for simple, stylish storage.

This guide put together by Julie Carlson and Margot Guralnick, with photographs by Matthew Williams, encourages readers to buy fewer (and better) things, get rid of the plastic and display, not stash, belongings.

You can learn how to tame the cord jungle, decant and 'think beyond the box'. There are more than 100 tips for room-by-room improvements, with interviews from experts such as a kindergarten teacher, a hotelier and a boat builder on how to make the most of limited space.

With new year resolutions on the horizon, it's the ideal read for the Christmas holidays and will inspire you to get organised for 2018.



# Screen and stage roles for Fizzog recruit Esther

AN ACTRESS from Stourbridge is proving to be in demand on both stage and screen.

Esther Stanford will be seen starring as Camilla Johnson, the girlfriend of security guard Barry Biglow, in daytime TV drama series Doctors.

At the same time she will be performing with Black Country comedy group The Fizzogs in their latest show – The Wicked Wizard of Fizzog – at the Netherton Arts Centre from tomorrow (Friday) to Sunday.

Esthe is no stranger to performing having developed an impressive portfolio over 20 years as an actress.

"I'm very lucky that as an actress I get to perform a variety of roles from drama to comedy to Fizzog madness," she said.

"In Doctors I play Camilla Johnson, Barry Biglow's annoying girlfriend. I think you hear me before you see me, bossing him round via an answerphone," said Esther.

## Tour

She is also looking forward to joining The Fizzogs on stage.

"This is my third Christmas tour with The Fizzogs playing the comedy character Eunice Clagg. I thoroughly enjoy working with the Fizzog girls. They are all genuinely lovely and very talented funny women."

Esther trained at the ITV Workshop where her fellow students included Birmingham's Oscar-nominated The Theory Of Everything star Felicity Jones and TV presenter Alison Hammond, who is currently in panto in Malvern and switched on Dudley's Christmas lights.

Esther's other television appear-



Esther as her Fizzogs character Eunice Clagg will join the touring show



The Fizzogs as their most famous characters the Dancing Grannies

ances include previous episodes of Doctors, as well as EastEnders, Heartbeat, Peak Practice and Hetty Wainthropp Investigates.

She founded and has run the Stourbridge-based Dramaworkshop for the last seven years and has helped nurture the careers of many budding actors.

Two of the current Fizzog cast –

Rebecca Fuller and Gregory Pipe – trained with her.

After its opening three consecutive nights at Netherton, the Fizzogs' show will resume in the New Year at the Crescent Theatre in Birmingham, visiting Telford, Bridgnorth, Bromsgrove, Walsall and Kidderminster venues. See [www.thefizzogs.com/get-tickets-to-see-the-fizzogs](http://www.thefizzogs.com/get-tickets-to-see-the-fizzogs)

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## OH WHAT A NIGHT! IT'S JERSEY BOYS INSIDE



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Managers Paul and Carol always ensure a warm welcome to customers both old and new at Blackheath's Shoulder of Mutton pub. For all the sports fans they boast three large TV screens featuring all sports on Sky, BT and all BOX OFFICE Events not to mention AT THE RACES.

For those who like 'doing' rather than 'watching', there is the availability of the pool table and dart board.

### Loyalty

The pub itself boasts a wide range of ciders, lagers, wines and spirits including four 'Real Ales' which they rotate weekly. Regulars very often enjoy ales such as Bathams, AJ Ales, Oakham, JHB, Stairway To Heaven and MA Pardoes Entire, plus many more!

The pub also run a loyalty scheme which means customers can get 10p back on their card for every pound they spend.

A pub spokesman added: "With a juke box and free WIFI to compliment the regular entertainment every Friday, customers cannot ask for much more from a local pub!"

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# They're just too good to be true!

**O**h what a night! The internationally acclaimed stage sensation, Jersey Boys, is working its way back to Birmingham with a festive run at the city's New Alexandra Theatre.

The hit musical has won 57 major awards, including the Olivier Award for Best New Musical, and will be on from tomorrow until January 6.

Jersey Boys tells the true life story of four boys from the wrong side of the tracks who wrote their own songs, invented their own unique sound, and sold 100 million records worldwide as Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons.

Featuring hit after legendary hit including Beggin', December 1963 (Oh What A Night), Can't Take My Eyes Off You, Walk Like A Man, Bye Bye Baby, Big Girls Don't Cry and many more, Jersey Boys is a story full of heart, humour and sheer musical razzmatazz.

The show features a starry cast of West End actors, including Simon Bailey who stars as Tommy DeVito.

Simon has carved out an impressive career after starring in Bat Boy, Marry Me A Little, I Can't Sing! The X-Factor Musical, Phantom of the Opera, Parade, Passion, Les Miserables and Joseph.

He was present when Jersey Boys began its nine-year run in London and went to the first night. "I didn't know about the music at first. But I went to the first night and within four minutes I knew I had to do it. I've bided my time until the part became available.

"To be honest with you, the show is so well written and so slick. The story is fast-paced and intelligently written. Essentially, you get the same story – the story of Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons – told by four different people. Seeing everyone's individual take on what happened is great because everyone gets to tell their side of the story. The way that the music comes in is brilliant. It's so fast-paced. You kind of forget you're watching something. It's seamless and flawless."

## IDENTIFY

Simon loves shows that give fans the maximum value for money.

"You are fully entertained for two-and-a-half hours. You just want to watch it again and again and again.

"I saw it 8 or 10 times and I became a fan of the show before I got to be in it."

The present tour features Michael Watson as Frankie Valli, Simon as Tommy De Vito, Declan Egan as Bob Gaudio and Lewis Griffiths as Nick Massi. All four have previously performed their roles in Jersey Boys to great acclaim: Michael and Simon in the West End, Declan in the West End and Australia, and Lewis in the first UK and Ireland tour.

Simon was delighted to be cast as De Vito. "Tommy is great. The thing I loved about it is that you need to find something you can identify with. I always identified with his desire to succeed. While I may not agree with him methods – but they make him fun to play – I respect and admire his desire to succeed. If you are growing up where they grew up, you either went into the army and die, go into the mob and die or be a star and don't die. Being in a band got him out of the wrong place. He did what he had to do. He discovered Frankie and it all came together. Tommy was the catalyst."

Simon spends most of his time in London's West End but was thrilled to be given a chance to get back on the road.

"This is my third tour. I did the Phantom of the Opera 25th anniversary back in 2012 and I did something at the start of my career. I've always enjoyed travel, internationally and nationally, so being on the road is great. Leaving London for a while is no bad thing, it refreshes you. I love the energy the audiences bring. We are in for a couple of weeks at a time and the audiences want to enjoy it."

Simon says the days of getting great shows in the West End and second tier shows in the provinces are long

Walk like a man – Jersey Boys will appear at the New Alex



*To be honest, the show is so well written and so slick*

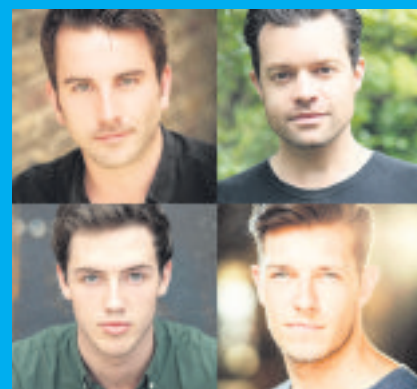
gone. These days, there's no difference in quality. Fans at Birmingham can look forward to a first class show.

"You get the great shows in the provinces these days. That dividing line between the West End and the rest of the UK is obsolete.

"I grew up going to the West End. I was very, very lucky. My parents were very much into the theatre. I was one of the lucky ones who went to see West End theatre from a very early age. One of the first things I ever saw was Joseph at the palladium with Jason Donovan. I will never forget the feeling of being in the theatre and it was so big and wonderful and magical. I was watching this whole brand new life and story on stage. It kind of blew my mind. I did a show at the Palladium a couple of years ago called I Can't Sing. I remember walking out on stage and seeing the seat I was sat in all those years before. It made me feel like a very lucky human being. Now I have the ability to transport other people and that's a real privilege."

ANDY RICHARDSON

● For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.





Fairy Godmother Beverley Knight



## Beverley leads all-star cast in panto spectacular

WOLVERHAMPTON soul diva Beverley Knight will make her pantomime debut in Cinderella, this year's Birmingham Hippodrome spectacular.

Beverley will be starring alongside Strictly Come Dancing 2016 finalist Danny Mac, Brum panto favourite Matt Slack, pop singer and Dancing On Ice star Suzanne Shaw, and veteran comedy duo The Grumbleweeds. The show will also feature the most faaabulous Ugly Sisters, Ceri Dupree and Phil Randall.

Cinderella promises all the ingredients of the perfect Hippodrome panto – great cast, laugh-out-loud comedy, lots of pop music, dazzling special effects and extravagant costumes. Cinderella runs from Tuesday until January 28.

Other festive shows for the family include 101 Dalmations, Debbie Issit's version of the story that became a Disney classic, with actors and amazing puppets at Birmingham Rep until January 13.

Wolverhampton's panto at the Grand stars singer Gareth Gates with Lisa Riley and the Black Country's own Doreen Tipton in Jack And The Beanstalk, at the Lichfield Street theatre until January 14.

Arena Birmingham is putting on a big event panto in the city centre mega-venue from December 20 to Christmas Eve with Peter Pan, starring Martin Kemp (of EastEnders and Spandau Ballet) as Captain Hook and Bradley Walsh (TV host and new Doctor Who companion) as Mr Smee. With a cast of 100 performers it is described as 'the world's biggest panto'.

## Festive music from pop to carols



There's a feast of festive music ahead this weekend and in the run up to Christmas, from pop to folk, classical to carols.

Slade get things rocking with Dave Hill and Don Powell in a sold out gig at Bilston's Robin 2 tomorrow night (Friday), whilst Midlands Hospital Choir Sing Noel in two concerts at Birmingham Town Hall tomorrow, 2.15 and 7pm.

Brum rocker Roy Wood brings his special Rockmas concert to the Symphony Hall on Saturday featuring special guest Paul Young. Expect to hear I wish It

Could Be Christmas Everyday. Also on Saturday 'the Barnsley Nightingale', folk singer-songwriter Kate Rusby, brings her Christmas show to Birmingham Town Hall. Meanwhile, '70s hits, including Rivers of Babylon, will be revived at the Robin 2 by Boney M featuring original member Maizie Williams, who grew up in Birmingham.

Celebrated Welsh singer Katherine Jenkins, pictured, performs her festive concert at the Symphony Hall on Sunday evening. There is a Christmas Carol Singalong led by Jonathan Cohen and featuring West End star Louise Dearman at Symphony Hall on

Monday at 2.30pm and then in the evening the same venue host Classic Carols with the City of Birmingham Choir and readings from actor and TV presenter Sir Tony Robison.

On Monday night Birmingham Town Hall hosts Yuletide laughs and music when the Rainer Hersch Orchestra present Christmas No1 Pop Singalong.

For three consecutive nights, Tuesday to Thursday at Symphony Hall, A Choral Christmas features City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Chorus in concerts hosted by Ore Oduba.

## Singer has home city concert date

ACCLAIMED Wolverhampton singer-songwriter Dan Whitehouse has a homecoming concert at Newhampton Arts Centre in Dunkley Street on Sunday. Dan, who released his fourth album That's Where I Belong last year, will be performing with a band and is supported by The Little Unsaid and Matt Sayers. The seated concert starts at 7.30pm and tickets cost £10. The 38-year-old musician will return in January as part of the city's Literary Festival to give a songwriting workshop.



## Time to take trip down the digital rabbit hole

A PROFESSIONAL cast is joined by an ensemble of 26 students from Birmingham Ormiston Academy for a production of Lewis Carroll's Alice In Wonderland at Birmingham's Old Rep theatre, next to Grand Central. Grace Dean takes on the title role of Alice with Alec Fellows-Bennett as the Mad Hatter in a show that will feature morning and afternoon performances until December 30. Audiences can expect a puppet cat and a digital rabbit hole in this new adaptation of a classic. This will be the third Christmas production produced by Birmingham Ormiston Academy, the regional academy for digital, creative and performing arts. The creative team are led by Scott Le Crass who has directed both locally and nationally since graduating from the Birmingham Rep Foundry programme.

## THE ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION STOURBRIDGE

*We wish the people of Stourbridge a MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR.*

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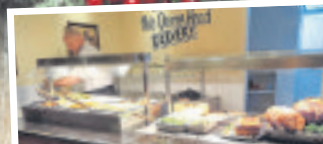
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CHOICE



Shirley Ballas

**Strictly Come Dancing - The Final (BBC1, 6.30pm)**  
Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman host the live grand final, which sees the final three celebrity contestants and their partners taking to the stage in dances that will determine whether they claim the glitterball trophy. Shirley Ballas, Bruno Tonioli, Craig Revel Horwood and Darcey Bussell offer their comments and score the performances, but as always, their opinions are merely guidance - the decision as to who waltzes off with this year's title is down to the viewers' vote. As the winner is decided, the rest of the 2017 cast are expected to return for one final, celebratory group performance.

BBC1

**6.00** Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Nigel Slater's 12 Tastes of Christmas. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Sports Personality of the Year 2017 - The Contenders. (R) **2.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **3.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.00** Final Score. **5.25** BBC News. **5.35** Regional Programme. **5.40** Pointless Celebrities. (R)  
**6.30** **Strictly Come Dancing - The Final.** Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman host the live grand final, which sees the final three celebrity contestants and their partners taking to the stage in dances that will determine whether they claim the glitterball trophy. Shirley Ballas, Bruno Tonioli, Craig Revel Horwood and Darcey Bussell offer their comments and score the performances, but as always, their opinions are merely guidance - the decision as to who waltzes off with this year's title is down to the viewers' vote. As the winner is decided, the rest of the 2017 cast are expected to return for one final, celebratory group performance.  
**9.00** **Michael McIntyre's Big Show.** The comedian hosts another evening of entertainment, as Irish singer and One Direction graduate Niall Horan performs on stage. Also delighting the masses tonight is Michael's fellow funnyman Jason Manford, and actress, comedienne and accomplished prat-faller Miranda Hart risks offending her family and friends as she hands her phone over in Celebrity Send-to-All. Plus, an A&E doctor is tricked into believing the theatre is actually a grand hotel as the host stages another ambitious Unexpected Star stunt.  
**10.00** **BBC News: Weather.**  
**10.20** **Match of the Day.** Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Manchester City v Tottenham Hotspur.  
**11.45** **The NFL Show.** Mark Chapman is joined by former players Osi Umenyiora and Jason Bell to present highlights of Thursday night's game, plus a look at the major stories shaping the NFL world.  
**12.15** **Film: Surviving Christmas.** (2004)  
**1.40** **Weather for the Week Ahead.** **1.45** BBC News.

BBC2

**6.15** Holiday of My Lifetime with Len Goodman. (R) **7.00** Nature's Wildest Events. (R) **7.30** Naomi's Nightmares of Nature. **8.00** Deadly 60. (R) **8.30** Show Me What You're Made Of: UK. **9.00** Saturday Mash-Up! **11.00** Penguins on a Plane: Great Animal Moves. (R) **12.00** Raymond Blanc: How to Cook Well. (R) **12.30** Tom Kerridge's Best Ever Dishes. (R) **1.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **1.45** Coast. (R) **2.20** Garden Rescue. (R) **2.50** Mastermind. (R) **3.20** **Film: Possessed.** (1947) Psychological thriller, starring Joan Crawford. **5.05** Talking Pictures: Roger Moore.  
**6.05** **Film: Escape to Athena.** (1979) Second World War Allied PoWs incarcerated on a Greek island plan to defy the SS by breaking out of prison and pulling off an art robbery, with the help of their liberal-minded camp commandant. Action adventure, with Roger Moore, David Niven, Telly Savalas, Elliott Gould, Stefanie Powers and Claudia Cardinale.  
**8.00** **Attenborough's Life That Glows.** David Attenborough explores the world of bioluminescence, the often spectacular natural light produced by creatures including glow-worms, fireflies and plankton, using specially designed cameras, some fitted to a new generation of deep-sea submersibles and robots to record instances in the very deep ocean. The programme shows a millipede glowing on the forest floor in California, the mesmerising flashing light patterns of the synchronous firefly, the spooky glow of a rare dragon fish and luminous earth worms in France. (R)  
**9.00** **Film: Bette and Joan.** New series. Drama exploring the rivalry between Bette Davis and Joan Crawford, beginning in 1962, as Joan considers a collaboration. Starring Jessica Lange and Susan Sarandon.  
**9.55** **Film: Bette and Joan.** Filming begins on What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?, and despite still being at odds, Bette and Joan unite as they campaign to get rid of an attractive female co-star.  
**10.45** **QI XL.**  
**11.30** **Jeff Lynne's ELO - Wembley or Bust.**  
**12.45** **Film: Shadow of the Vampire.** (2000) **2.10** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

**6.00** **CITV: Sooty.** **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **7.20** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Mission Employable. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors. **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Fangbone. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Thunderbirds Are Go. **9.00** Scrambled!: Wishfart. (R) **9.25** **ITV News.** **9.30** Saturday Morning with James Martin. **11.25** Gino's Italian Coastal Escape. (R) **11.50** Countrywise. (R) **12.20** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **12.45** **ITV News: Weather.** **12.55** Endeavour. (R) **2.55** **Film: The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey.** (2012) Unassuming hobbit Bilbo Baggins is pulled out of his comfortable life when Gandalf the wizard volunteers him for a dangerous quest. He joins a party of dwarves who are on a mission to reclaim their lost homeland, which has been taken over by a dragon. When the group journeys into the Misty Mountains, Bilbo becomes separated from the dwarves and falls into a cave, where he finds himself confronted by Gollum and forced to play a riddle game. It is set in Middle-earth 60 years before the events of The Lord of the Rings and is the first part of Peter Jackson's fantasy adventure trilogy based on JRR Tolkien's novel, starring Martin Freeman, Ian McKellen, Richard Armitage, James Nesbitt, Ken Stott, Cate Blanchett, Ian Holm and Christopher Lee.  
**9.45** **ITV News: Weather.**  
**10.00** **Film: The Hangover.** (2009) Three men on a stag weekend in Las Vegas wake up to find they have lost the groom and cannot remember the night before. Comedy, with Bradley Cooper.  
**11.55** **Tonight at the London Palladium.** Bradley Walsh welcomes ABC, Nathan Sykes, the West End cast of Guys and Dolls, singer Gregory Porter and classical guitarist Milos to the world-famous stage. (R)  
**12.45** **Jackpot247.** **3.00** The Hungry Sailors. (R) **3.50** **ITV Nightscreen.**

CHANNEL 4

**6.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.20** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.45** Frasier. (R) **8.15** Frasier. (R) **8.40** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **9.05** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **9.35** The Simpsons. (R) **10.05** The Simpsons. (R) **10.35** The Simpsons. (R) **11.05** **Film: Holiday in Handcuffs.** (2007) **12.50** Come Dine with Me Christmas. (R) **1.20** Come Dine with Me Christmas. (R) **1.55** Come Dine with Me Christmas. (R) **2.25** Come Dine with Me Christmas. (R) **2.55** Come Dine with Me Christmas. (R) **3.30** Grand Designs. (R) **4.30** Best Laid Plans. **5.35** Channel 4 News.  
**6.00** **Word of the Year.** Susie Dent is joined by a selection of celebrity guests to reveal which prominent term has been picked by Oxford Dictionaries to become the "Word of the Year" for 2017. The usual mix of inventive insults, fashionable portmanteaus and unusual descriptions have formed the shortlist this year, taking in everything from Kim Jong Un's unexpected use of the word "dotard" to describe Donald Trump, to an explosion in the use of the word "snowflake" to describe people with an inflated sense of their uniqueness. Joining Susie to pick through this year's crop of linguistic treasures are Jo Brand, Sara Pascoe, Nish Kumar, Aisling Bea, Rick Edwards and Jamie Laing.  
**7.00** **Guy Martin vs the Robot Car.** The presenter explores the world of automated self-driving vehicles, attempting to build one of his own and taking on a computer-controlled car in a race. (R)  
**8.00** **The World's Most Expensive Presents.** Cameras follow craftsmen and women producing lavish gifts with price tags to match, including a 24-carat gold-plated bike worth £250,000. (R)  
**9.00** **Film: Pitch Perfect.** (2012) Comedy, starring Anna Kendrick, Rebel Wilson and Elizabeth Banks.  
**11.10** **Film: The Inbetweeners Movie.** (2011) Awkward teenagers Simon, Will, Jay and Neil head to Greece for a wild holiday - but things do not go to plan. Comedy, with Joe Thomas, Simon Bird, James Buckley and Blake Harrison.  
**1.00** **Film: Tomorrow.** When the War Began. (2010) **2.40** The Last Leg. (R) **3.35** Hollyoaks. **5.40** Extreme Cake Makers. (R)

CHANNEL 5

**6.00** Milkshake! **9.50** The Gadget Show. (R) **10.45** **Film: Nativity 3: Dude, Where's My Donkey?!** (2014) **12.55** **Film: One Christmas Eve.** (2014) Family comedy, starring Anne Heche. **2.40** **Film: Love Always, Santa.** (2016) **4.25** **Film: Mariah Carey's A Christmas Melody.** (2015) **5.25** 5 News Update. **5.30** **Film: Mariah Carey's A Christmas Melody.** (2015) Concluded.  
**6.05** **Sinkholes: Buried Underground.** Documentary examining the underlying forces behind sinkholes, which can swallow streets, rip up motorways and even drag unfortunate bystanders to their deaths. (R)  
**7.00** **Sinkholes: Sucked Under.** Geologist Tom Backhouse investigates sinkholes caused by collapsed mine shafts, including one in Gosforth that opened up in front of a flat and led down to an abandoned mine. (R)  
**8.00** **Sinkholes: Sucked to Death.** Documentary examining the underlying forces behind sinkholes, which can swallow streets, rip up motorways and even drag unfortunate bystanders to their deaths. Last in the series. (R)  
**8.55** 5 News Weekend.  
**9.00** **Football on 5: The Championship.** Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games, including Cardiff City v Hull City and Sunderland v Fulham.  
**10.00** **Football on 5: Goal Rush.** Colin Murray introduces all the goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, including Doncaster Rovers v Oldham Athletic and Exeter City v Stevenage.  
**10.30** **NCIS: New Orleans.** Pride investigates a murder on board a deep-sea oil rig, but his placed in peril when the team discovers a gas leak on-site is on the verge of causing a catastrophic explosion.  
**11.20** **NCIS: New Orleans.** Pride faces a conflict of interests when a hacker collective led by one of his old contacts is implicated in the theft of thousands of classified government files.  
**12.15** SuperCasino. **3.10** Harrogate: A Yorkshire Christmas. (R) **4.50** House Doctor. (R) **5.15** Wildlife SOS. (R) **5.40** Chinese Food in Minutes. (R) **5.55** Access. (R)

DIGITAL

**BBC Four**  
**7.00** All Aboard! The Sleigh Ride **9.00** Witnesses: A Frozen Death **10.55** The Vietnam War **11.50** Rich Hall's You Can Go to Hell, I'm Going to Texas **1.20** Natural World **2.20** Flamenco: Gypsy Soul **3.20** Close  
**ITV2**  
**11.25** Take Me Out Celebrity Special **12.30** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! Coming Out **1.35** Mr Bean **2.45** **Film: Mr Bean's Holiday** (2007) **3.45** FYI Daily **3.50** **Film: Yogi Bear** (2010) **5.35** FYI Daily **5.40** **Film: Yogi Bear** (2010) **6.10** **Film: Liar Liar** (1997) **7.10** FYI Daily **7.15** **Film: Liar Liar** (1997) **7.55** **Film: The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift** (2006) **8.55** FYI Daily **9.00** **Film: The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift** (2006) **10.00** Celebrity Juice Christmas Special **11.00** Family Guy **12.30** American Dad! **1.25** The Cleveland Show **1.55** Celebrity Juice Christmas Special **2.45** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records  
**ITV3**  
**12.40** **Film: Columbo** Goes to the Guillotine (1989) **2.40** The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes **5.00** **Film: Mamma Mia!** (2008) **6.05** FYI Daily **6.10** **Film: Mamma Mia!** (2008) **7.10** Agatha Christie's Marple **9.00** Grantchester (1971) **12.15** **Film: Up Pompeii** (1971) **2.00** FYI Daily  
**ITV4**  
**11.10** **Film: The Last Sunset** (1961) **12.10** FYI Daily **12.15** **Film: The Last Sunset** (1961) **1.30** ITV Racing Live from Cheltenham. Coverage from Cheltenham and Doncaster. **4.00** Storage Wars: Texas **5.00** **Film: Paranoia** (2013) **6.00** FYI Daily **6.05** **Film: Paranoia** (2013) **7.15** **Film: Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure** (1989) **8.20** FYI Daily **8.25** **Film: Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure** (1989) **9.00** **Film: Navy Seals** (1990) **10.05** FYI Daily **10.10** **Film: Navy Seals** (1990) **11.20** **Film: Universal Soldier: Day of Reckoning** (2012) **12.20** FYI Daily  
**E4**  
**11.45** **Film: A Turtle's Tale: Sammy's Adventures** (2010) **1.30** The Goldbergs **4.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** **Film: The Hunger Games** (2012) **11.50** Gogglebox **2.00** The Inbetweeners **3.30** Rude Tube **4.25** Rude(ish) Tube  
**Film4**  
**11.00** Judy Moody and the Not Bummer Summer (2011) **1.00** Fast Girls (2012) **2.45** Volcano (1997) **4.50** The Return of the Musketeers (1989) **6.55** X-Men (2000) **9.00** Men in Black (1997) **10.55** The Purge: Anarchy (2014)

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## CHOICE



Alan Sugar

**The Apprentice (BBC1, 9pm)**

The two finalists take on their last challenge to win a coveted investment from Alan Sugar, with hand-picked teams of contestants from the series returning to aid them in their endeavours. They face a three-day challenge to create brands and adverts to pitch to a room full of experts - but a poor commercial and an uninspiring brand name do neither candidate any favours. Last in the series.

## BBC1

**6.00** Breakfast. **7.35** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Fern Britton Meets Rev Rose Hudson-Wilkin. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News. Weather. **1.15** Mary Berry's Country House Secrets. (R) **2.15** Songs of Praise. **2.50** Film: Toy Story 2. (1999) Animated sequel, with the voice of Tom Hanks. **4.20** Blue Planet II. (R) **5.20** BBC News. **5.35** Regional Programme. **5.45** Countryfile.

**6.45 Sports Personality of the Year 2017.** Gary Lineker, Clare Balding and Gabby Logan present this year's ceremony live from the Echo Arena in Liverpool. Andy Murray was presented the prestigious main award in 2016, his third overall and second in successive years. However, he is not in contention this year after an injury-plagued campaign. The shortlist this time is world heavyweight boxing champion Anthony Joshua, four-time Tour de France winner Chris Froome, Formula 1 world champion Lewis Hamilton, short-track speed skater Elise Christie, Tottenham Hotspur striker Harry Kane, British tennis number one Johanna Konta, world superbike champion Jonathan Rea, Paralympian sprinter Jonnie Peacock, track legend Mo Farah, breaststroke world champion Adam Peaty, England cricketer Anya Shrubsole and Olympic taekwondo medalist Bianca Walkden. The Team of the Year, Coach of the Year, Lifetime Achievement, Overseas Sports Personality of the Year, Young Sports Personality of the Year, Unsung Hero and Helen Rollason awards will also be handed out.

**9.00 The Apprentice.** The two finalists take on their last challenge to win an investment from Alan Sugar, with contestants from the series returning to aid them in their endeavours. Last in the series.

**10.00 The Apprentice: You're Hired.** Rhod Gilbert is joined by the winner, the runner-up and Lord Sugar himself, as the business tycoon reveals the reasons behind his final decision. Last in the series.

**11.00 BBC News.**

**11.20 Regional Programme.**

**11.30 Ronny Chieng: International Student.**

**11.55 Weather for the Week Ahead.**

**12.00** BBC News.

## BBC2

**6.05** Coast. (R) **7.05** Gardeners' World. (R) **7.35** The Secret History of the British Garden. (R) **8.35** Countryfile. (R) **9.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.00** Nigel Slater's 12 Tastes of Christmas. (R) **11.30** My Life on a Plate. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Escape to the Country. **1.30** Live Equestrian: Olympia 2017. Coverage of the sixth day of the Olympia International Horse Show. **4.35** Ski Sunday. **5.20** Film: Nativity! (2009) Comedy, starring Martin Freeman.

**7.00 Life in Polar Bear Town with Gordon Buchanan.** Wildlife cameraman Gordon Buchanan visits the community of Churchill, Manitoba, on the shores of Canada's Hudson Bay. For two months every year, the people of Churchill must share their town with huge packs of polar bears, which gather at the bay every autumn to wait for the sea ice to form, so they can begin their winter hunt. Gordon goes on patrol with the "bear cops" charged with ensuring the towns residents - and the bears themselves - stay safe, and meets the bin-men who must dodge bears every day as they deliver refuse to the dump. He also illustrates the dangers of living in the "polar bear capital of the world" as he interviews a young woman who was mauled by a bear, right in the middle of Churchill's main street. (R)

**8.00 James May's Toy Stories: The Motorcycle Diaries.** The Top Gear presenter sets out to build a motorbike and sidecar entirely out of Meccano and complete a lap of the Isle of Man's TT circuit with passenger Oz Clarke. (R)

**9.00 The Alternativity.** Documentary about the making of a contemporary performance inspired by the nativity story.

**10.00 Delectologists Christmas Special.**

**10.30 Match of the Day 2.** Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action.

**11.30 Insert Name Here.** Katy Brand, Ed Gamble, Suzannah Lipscomb and Amol Rajan join captains Richard Osman and Josh Widdicombe to answer Sue Perkins' questions about famous people who share a name. (R)

**12.00** Talking Pictures: Roger Moore. (R) **1.00** Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **2.00** Holby City. (R) **3.00** This Is BBC Two.

## ITV

**6.00** CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.20** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dana. (R) **7.00** Mission Employable. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Ben 10. **8.10** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Tom and Jerry: Santa's Little Helpers. **9.00** Scrambled!: Wistful. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Best Walks with a View with Julia Bradbury. (R) **9.55** Countrywise Winter Wonderland. (R) **10.40** The Martin Lewis Money Show. (R) **11.10** Save Money: Good Food. (R) **11.40** How to Spend it Well at Christmas with Phillip Schofield. (R) **12.40** ITV News: Weather.

**12.45** Film: Step Up. (2006) Romantic dance drama, with Channing Tatum and Jenna Dewan. **2.50** Midsomer Murders. (R) **4.45** Tipping Point. (R) **5.45** The Chase: Celebrity Special.

**6.45 The Chase: The Bloopers.** Bradley Walsh presents a compilation of outtakes from the quiz show, featuring regular chasers the Governors, the Beast, the Vixen, the Sinnerman and the Dark Destroyer.

**7.40 Regional Programme:** Weather.

**7.50** ITV News: Weather.

**8.00 Film: The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug.** (2013) The party of dwarves and their hobbit ally continue the quest to reclaim their lost kingdom, journeying through the forest home of ancestral enemy the elves and finally facing the dragon that drove them from their home. Meanwhile, Gandalf the wizard investigates the rise of a mysterious dark power. Part two of Peter Jackson's fantasy adventure trilogy based on JRR Tolkien's novel, starring Martin Freeman, Ian McKellen, Richard Armitage and Orlando Bloom.

**11.05** ITV News: Weather.

**11.25** **Through the Christmas Keyhole.** Keith Lemon hosts a Christmas special of the game show, as celebrity panelists Shayne Ward, Kelly Brook and Johnny Vegas are asked to identify the homes of the rich and famous. (R)

**12.15** Jackpot247. Viewers get the chance to participate in live interactive gaming from the comfort of their sofas, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team.

**3.00** Tenable. Quiz, hosted by Warwick Davis. (R)

## CHANNEL 4

**6.10** 3rd Rock from the Sun. (R) **6.35** 3rd Rock from the Sun. (R) **7.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Paul Hollywood: A Baker's Life. (R) **1.00** Jamie's Ultimate Christmas. (R) **2.05** The Simpsons. (R) **2.35** The Simpsons. (R) **3.05** Film: Jingle All the Way. (1996) Comedy, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger. **4.50** Born Silly. **5.20** Channel 4 News. **5.50** Film: Miracle on 34th Street. (1994) Christmas family drama remake, with Richard Attenborough.

**8.00 Coastal Railways with Julie Walters.** The actress travels from Cardigan Bay to Liverpool, visiting the heritage railway in Tywyn that was the inspiration for Thomas the Tank Engine and a community that is famous for knitting. She also paints a carriage in Boston Lodge, catches the famous Festiniog railway through Snowdonia, and visits Europe's fastest zip wire and largest pet cemetery. Last in the series.

**9.00 Inside Bentley: A Very British Motor Car.** Documentary going behind the scenes at the car company's plant in northwest England, as work commences on a new range of 4x4s. This is the first time cameras have had access to the plant, which is currently undergoing millions in new investment. The programme features the local people and master craftsmen working on the factory floor as well as visiting the world's most exclusive car showroom in Mayfair and the secretive department where customers can obtain the latest upgrades to their bespoke vehicle.

**10.00** **Film: Die Hard.** (1988) A New York cop battles armed men who have taken over a Los Angeles skyscraper where his wife is working on Christmas Eve. Action thriller, starring Bruce Willis and Alan Rickman.

**12.35** **Film: Mercury Rising.** (1998) An FBI agent shields an autistic child from government assassins after the boy cracks a supposedly unbreakable top-secret code. Thriller, starring Bruce Willis and Alec Baldwin. **2.25** **Film: Origins.** (2014) Drama, starring Michael Pitt. **4.10** Location, Location, Location. Revisiting house-hunters in Kent and Edinburgh. (R) **5.05** Extreme Cake Makers. (R) **5.35** Countdown. (R)

## CHANNEL 5

**6.00** Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.15** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **6.20** Poppy Cat. (R) **6.35** Whisper. (R) **6.40** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.45** Milkshake! Bopping About. (R) **6.50** Simon. (R) **6.55** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.10** Puffin Rock. **7.15** Milkshake! Bop Box. (R) **7.20** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.35** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.50** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.15** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.30** Nella the Princess Knight. (R) **8.50** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.10** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.30** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.45** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.55** Peppa Pig. (R) **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.30** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **12.00** Film: Season's Greetings. (2016) Festive comedy, starring Laura Bell Bundy. **1.50** Film: Twelve Trees of Christmas. (2013) Drama, starring Lindy Booth. **3.35** Film: Our First Christmas. (2008) Family drama, starring Julie Warner. **4.35** News Update. **4.40** Film: Our First Christmas. (2008) Concluded. **5.20** 5 News Weekend. **5.25** Film: A Heavenly Christmas. (2016) Premiere. Festive romance, starring Kristin Davis.

**7.10 Film: Legally Blonde.** (2001) A dizzy teenager enrolls at Harvard to try to prove to her ex-boyfriend that she is not stupid, but finds herself out of her depth. Comedy, with Reese Witherspoon and Luke Wilson.

**8.10** 5 News Update.

**8.15** **Film: Legally Blonde.** (2001) Concluded.

**9.00 Agatha Christie's Crooked House.** Adaptation of the mystery novel, starring Max Irons and Terence Stamp. The son of the assistant commissioner at Scotland Yard returns to London from Cairo following the end of the Second World War, only to discover his fiancée's grandfather has been murdered. He uses his father's connections to become involved in the investigation, only to discover nobody has an alibi but the woman he loves may have a motive. With Gillian Anderson and Glenn Close.

**11.00** **Film: Sleepy Hollow.** (1999) A sceptical 18th-century detective takes on a headless horseman who decapitates his victims. Tim Burton's gothic horror, with Johnny Depp.

**12.55** Criminals: Caught on Camera. (R) **1.15** SuperCasino. **3.10** My Crazy Christmas Obsession. (R)

## DIGITAL

**BBC Four**  
**7.00** Only Connect **7.30** Great Continental Railway Journeys **8.00** Mrs Dickens' Family Christmas **9.00** The Mystery of Edwin Drood **11.00** The Real Star of Bethlehem: A Sky at Night Christmas Special **12.00** The Genius of Marie Curie - The Woman Who Lit Up the World **1.40** Roger Bannister: Everest on the Track **2.00** Timeshift: Mods, Rockers and Bank Holiday Mayhem

## ITV2

**11.50** Take Me Out Celebrity Special **12.55** Mr Bean **2.00** Film: Jack Frost (1998) **3.00** FYI Daily **3.05** Film: Jack Frost (1998) **4.05** Catchphrase Christmas Special **5.05** Film: Happy Feet (2006) **6.05** FYI Daily **6.10** Film: Happy Feet (2006) **7.15** Film: Gravity (2013) **8.15** FYI Daily **8.20** Film: Gravity (2013) **9.00** Film: The Holiday (2006) **10.00** FYI Daily **10.05** Film: The Holiday (2006) **11.45** Family Guy **1.40** American Dad!

## ITV3

**1.30** Film: Columbo: The Most Dangerous Match **3.10** Film: Columbo: Sex and the Married Detective (1989) **5.15** Film: Up Pompeii (1971) **6.20** FYI Daily **6.25** Film: Up Pompeii (1971) **6.55** Doc Martin **9.00** Tommy Cooper Forever **11.00** A Touch of Frost **1.05** The Knock

## ITV4

**11.25** Film: Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure (1989) **12.30** FYI Daily **12.35** Film: Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure (1989) **1.10** Film: Red River (1948) **2.10** FYI Daily **2.15** Film: Red River (1948) **3.55** Film: Bend of the River (1952) **4.55** FYI Daily **5.00** Film: Bend of the River (1952) **5.55** British Superbike Championship Review 2017 **7.55** River Monsters **9.00** Film: Species II (1998) **10.05** FYI Daily **10.10** Film: Species II (1998) **10.55** Film: Gangs of New York (2002) **11.55** FYI Daily **12.00** Film: Gangs of New York (2002)

## E4

**11.00** Made in Chelsea **12.00** Film: Catch That Kid (2004) **1.50** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **2.00** The Goldbergs **3.30** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** Film: The Three Musketeers (2011) **10.10** Googlebox **12.20** The Inbetweeners **2.00** Rude Tube: All Things Weird and Wonderful **3.00** Googlebox **3.55** Holyoaks

## Film4

**11.00** The Book of Life (2014) **1.00** First Daughter (2004) **3.20** The Train (1964) **6.05** Robin Hood (2010) **9.00** Thor (2011) **11.15** Love Is Strange (2014) **1.05** Mindscape (2013) **3.10** Close

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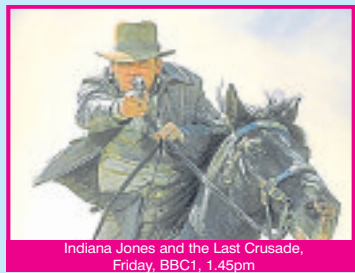


FILM CHOICES

**MONDAY**  
**Christmas Bucket List, Channel 5, 5.20pm**  
Isobel plans a storybook Christmas with her boyfriend, including a snow-covered cottage and a carefully selected list of holiday traditions, but he goes Awol and a tempting new romance turns her life upside down. Comedy, starring Alicia Witt. (2016)

**TUESDAY**  
**A Prince for Christmas, Channel 5, 5.25pm**  
In an effort to escape his upcoming arranged marriage, a European prince travels to America incognito over Christmas, where he meets a charming waitress. Festive romance, starring Viva Bianca and Kirk Barker. (2015)

**WEDNESDAY**  
**James and the Giant Peach, Channel 5, 12.25pm**  
An unhappy orphan living with his cruel aunts discovers a gigantic peach growing in the garden. Venturing inside, he meets six friendly insects and together they embark on a magical journey. Animated and live-action fantasy, based on Roald Dahl's novel, starring Paul Terry, Joanna Lumley and Miriam Margolyes. (1996)



Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, Friday, BBC1, 1.45pm

**THURSDAY**  
**Wallace & Gromit in The Curse of the Were-Rabbit, BBC1, 3.35pm**  
Inventor Wallace and his canine sidekick Gromit have set up a pest-control service, and are called in to stop rabbits overrunning a garden show. However, the pair are overwhelmed when a destructive giant bunny arrives on the scene, while an interfering aristocrat contrives to make matters worse. Nick Park's Oscar-winning animated adventure, with the voices of Peter Sallis and Ralph Fiennes. (2005)

**FRIDAY**  
**Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, BBC1, 1.45pm**  
The intrepid archaeologist sets out to find his estranged father, who has gone missing while searching for the Holy Grail. Once reunited, the duo team up to finish the task and locate the sacred relic before the Nazis get their hands on it. Action adventure sequel, starring Harrison Ford. (1989)

# The Gentlemen are still in a League of their own

If there's one thing you're guaranteed when tuning into The League of Gentlemen it's trouble – and as Mark Gatiss, Steve Pemberton and Reece Shearsmith are back for three special editions this week, you can bet there'll be trouble aplenty in Royston Vasey.

If you haven't heard of the show, it focuses on some of the strangest characters ever to grace the small screen.

Take Edward and Tubbs, for example. They're a brother and sister living in "a local shop for local people" who hate strangers and bump them off at every opportunity, while Harvey and Val Denton are the relatives from Hell with a penchant for toads.

Then there's Barbara, the transsexual cab driver whose operation seems to have gone horribly wrong, and Pauline, a vindictive employment restart officer totally obsessed with pens.

But it's been a decade and a half since we last saw the boys all working together, in tandem with

their writing partner, Jeremy Dyson. They've decided to resurrect the town and its weird and wonderful inhabitants to celebrate the 20th anniversary of their first BBC show, a six-part radio broadcast entitled On the Town with the League of Gentlemen; its success led to the first TV series two years later.

"We are thrilled to bits to be returning to Royston Vasey in celebration of our 20 years at the BBC (with time off for bad behaviour)," say the boys. "We look forward to digging up the old characters - some of them literally - and seeing how life has treated them."

"It's been great fun to write these Specials, and we've saved money on the make-up budget by kindly growing ancient ourselves. Like the sign says: You'll Never Leave."

Gatiss, Shearsmith and Pemberton met while studying drama at Bretton Hall College in West Yorkshire, and struggled to make it as actors before teaming up with Gatiss' friend Dyson and devising a stage show inspired by

oddballs they had met, as well as their mutual love of classic British horror movies such as The Wicker Man, Don't Look Now and those made by Hammer.

After three TV series, a Christmas special, a film, stage show and live tours, the quartet decided to work on new projects. All three actors have worked constantly on a range of projects; Gatiss is perhaps best known for Doctor Who (he appears in this year's Christmas special) and Sherlock, while Pemberton and Shearsmith have appeared in a number of projects independently as well as together on Psychoville and Inside No 9.

Dyson has written books, been a script editor and co-created the West End hit Ghost Stories with Andy Nyman; a film version is heading our way soon.

Last year, Gatiss mentioned during an interview that perhaps when the League did come back together, they could do something with a Brexit theme, seeing as Britain had become a "local country for local people."



The League of Gentlemen, Monday, BBC2, 10pm

# BEST OF THE REST

**MONDAY**  
**Would I Lie to You? At Christmas BBC1, 9.30pm**

Rob Brydon hosts a festive edition of the comedy panel show in which the participants aim to hoodwink their opponents with absurd facts and plausible lies about themselves in a bid to secure a team victory. Joining team captains David Mitchell and Lee Mack for the Christmas fun are former Test Match Special commentator Henry Blofeld, witless star Kerry Howard, broadcaster Reverend Richard Coles and BBC News presenter Clive Myrie. They all reveal amazing stories, but are they telling the truth, or making it all up?

**TUESDAY**  
**The Royal Variety Performance 2017 ITV, 7.30pm**  
Miranda Hart hosts the annual event, this time from the London Palladium Theatre in the presence of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. The line-up includes Alfie Boe, Michael Ball, Seal and Britain's Got Talent Winner Tokio Myers. Tom Allen and the cast of Benidorm are among the acts providing the laughs. Frasier veteran Kelsey Grammer also makes an appearance with the cast of stage hit Big Fish, and there will be a chance to see routines from musicals 42nd Street and Annie.

**WEDNESDAY**  
**Judi Dench's Secret Woodland BBC1, 8pm**

The name tree-hugger is often used a derogatory term aimed at those who care for the countryside. But after tuning into this documentary, you may get the impression that Judi Dench would be proud to be called such a thing. For years, she has had a deep love, respect and affection for trees, and now has a secret woodland – or private arboretum, if you prefer – at her Surrey home. It's an area she created with a fellow enthusiast, her late husband Michael Williams, and one she now tends to with her close companion, wildlife enthusiast David Mills. Filmed over the course of a year, the programme offers an insight into the impact that the changing seasons have on the area, while the Oscar-winning star learns more about how trees help the environment.

**THURSDAY**  
**Joanna & Jennifer: Absolutely Changers BBC2, 9pm**  
Champagne was always the tipple of choice for Absolutely

Fabulous characters Patsy Stone and Edina Monsoon – and it seems it's a similar story off-screen for actresses Joanna Lumley and Jennifer Saunders, who like nothing better than sharing a glass of bubbly. Now, they're about to learn more about their favourite drink as they head to the Champagne region of North Eastern France to discover how it's made. Along the way, they visit family run vineyards, and join the seasonal workers who are dealing with this year's grape harvest. But the Ab Fab stars also discover a few things they didn't know about each other as they share a few anecdotes and stories from their lives. And that's definitely worth raising a glass too.



Al Murray's Make Christmas Great Again, Friday, ITV, 9pm

**FRIDAY**  
**Celebrity 5 Go in Search of Santa Claus Channel 5, 8.30pm**  
You can run but you can't hide from celebrity travelogues

these days. But while some have featured stars you might not expect to pop up on docusoaps – such as Julie Walters, Timothy West, Prunella Scales and Miriam Margolyes – there are others you've kind of come to expect to take part. Some of them feature in this 90-minute documentary. Actors Christopher Biggins and Sue Holderness, comedian Joe Pasquale, musician-turned-presenter Reverend Richard Coles and cook Rustie Lee are taking an epic trip into the Arctic Circle to explore Lapland, the official home of Santa Claus. They stay in traditional cabins and lodges, indulge in the 'delights' of saunas, river dipping and whipping with hot birch twigs while on the trail of the big man with the beard.

**Al Murray's Make Christmas Great Again**  
ITV, 9pm  
It's the last Friday before Christmas (known in some circles as Black or Mad Friday), which means that a lot of people will be heading to the pub to celebrate. However, if you don't fancy facing hordes of people with a little too much festive spirit, the good news is that Al Murray's Pub Landlord is back to host his own televised lock-in at The Reindeer's Head. Backed by his house band, The Remoans, he'll be leading festive sing-songs on numbers including You Can't Even Say Christmas Any More.

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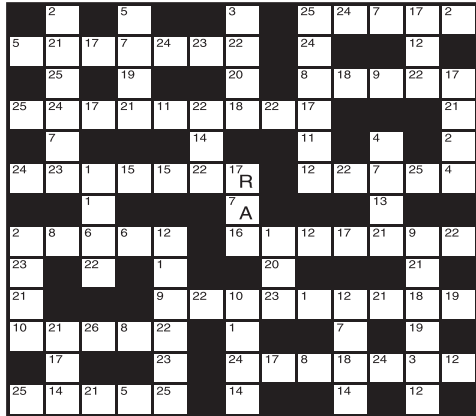


## BRAIN GYM

No.460

## Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	T	2	A	3	Q	4	Z	5	U	6	Y	7	V	8	W	9	P	10	G	11	F	12	X	13	I
14	K	15	B	16	J	17	S	18	N	19	R	20	H	21	E	22	D	23	C	24	O	25	L	26	M

## Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

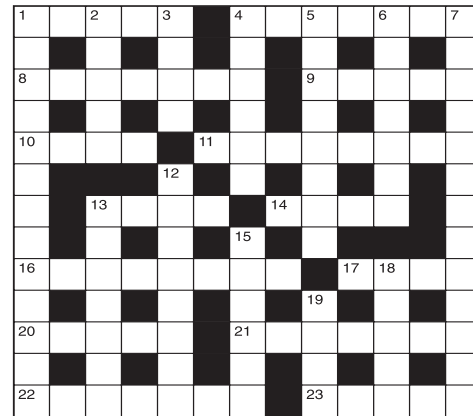
## Cryptic Clues:

## Across

1. A game to settle the ashes? (5)
4. Film with a good finish (7)
8. In my view, a vegetable with very good stuffing (7)
9. Best substitute for shaving soap (5)
10. The last of the wine (4)
11. Keep for a lock (8)
13. It's bound to secure advance accommodation (4)
14. Thrash in the return game (4)
16. Snuggled into a new quilt, managed to remain undisturbed (8)
17. A race to make you sweat (4)
20. Keep out of sight after a number make complaints (5)
21. Stop and go after amber changes (7)
22. The girl looks different, having slimmed (7)
23. It's the herb season, we hear (5)

## Down

1. New Liberal M.P. to put up a bill inside? Doubtful (13)
2. A weapon used daily by most people (5)
3. Deceiver stood up to use abusive language (4)
4. A number finish with an alternative seller (6)
5. Public deliveries (8)
6. Titanic destroyer (7)
7. It's said to be the best place to be (4,5,4)
12. A number on a search are winning (8)
13. Attitude taken by a navigator (7)
15. Passenger-ship has a slender look (6)
18. Is in good time but nearly loses a point (5)
19. Come up against an objection (4)



## Quick Clues:

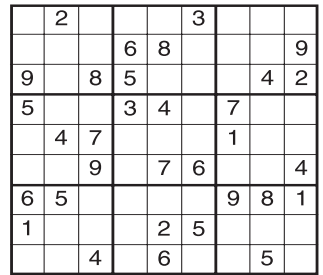
## Across

1. Emulate (5)
4. Amuses (7)
8. Idiomatic (7)
9. Shelf (5)
10. Inactive (4)
11. Deep (8)
13. A volcano (4)
14. Warmth (4)
16. Records (8)
17. Separate (4)
20. Angry (5)
21. Raise (7)
22. Inherent (7)
23. Cloth (5)

## Down

1. Freezing (13)
2. Essential (5)
3. Booty (4)
4. Abandon (6)
5. Traduced (8)
6. Fortification (7)
7. Resolution (13)
12. Contrive (8)
13. Charm (7)
15. Disclose (6)
18. Lessen (5)
19. Despatch (4)

## Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

## LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS &gt;

1	4	3	6	2	7	8	9	5
5	2	6	4	9	8	3	7	1
7	9	8	1	3	5	4	6	2
4	8	2	5	6	1	9	3	7
3	7	1	9	8	4	2	5	6
8	6	7	3	1	2	5	4	9
9	1	4	8	5	6	7	2	3
2	3	5	7	4	9	6	1	8

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:  
 CRYPTIC - Across: 3 Billiards; 8 Uses; 9 Capricorn; 10 Prison; 11 Horse; 14 Charm; 15 Trim; 16 Amass; 18 Owe; 20 Track; 21 Solid; 24 Tender; 25 Frightful; 26 Coin; 27 Murderess.  
 Down: 1 Suspicion; 2 Meditates; 4 Iran; 5 Largo; 6 Accost; 7 Dora; 9 Comma; 11 Hoard; 12 Errand boy; 13 Smoke ring; 17 Steel; 19 Dogged; 22 Inter; 23 Frau; 24 Tugs.  
 QUICK - Across: 3 Promenade; 8 Etch; 9 Attribute; 10 Elapse; 11 Deal; 14 Those; 15 Each; 16 Realm; 18 Roam; 20 Enter; 21 Loyal; 24 Beacon; 25 Palatable; 26 Bass; 27 Personnel.  
 Down: 1 Sedentary; 2 Octagonal; 4 Rite; 5 Merge; 6 Nubility; 7 Duty; 9 Aster; 11 Drawl; 12 Tactician; 13 Sharpness; 17 Melee; 19 Morass; 22 Again; 23 Vase; 24 Blue.

## Quiz

1. Which English king made the Homburg fashionable?
2. As which bird is the Holy Spirit usually depicted?
3. To which mountain range does Ben Nevis belong?
4. Which war was ended by the Treaty of Paris in 1856?
5. What is a monkey puzzle?
6. What was Walter Lantz's most famous flying cartoon creation?
7. Which singer-songwriter was born Robert Zimmerman?
8. In which city is the Bridge of Brotherhood and Unity?
9. Who wrote The Doll's House?
10. What is the brightest star in the constellation Lyra?

## Last week's solutions:

- Quiz: 1 Carmen; 2 Arthur Miller; 3 New York; 4 Force; 5 Costa Rica; 6 Id est; 7 Tarragon; 8 Montana; 9 Dolphin; 10 Socrates.

## Niner: HARMONIES

## Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

17235  
31175678  
494878

gives a criminal,  
gives a second criminal,  
gives a money lender.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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# Mermaid meal went swimmingly

IT'S long been THE place to go. When we first moved to the area – three decades ago – we would often drive past The Mermaid at Compton and it was very rare that the car park was not full.

Looking at the pub, on the Bridgnorth Road, it is hard not to be attracted to it. In the summer months the vast covering of the beautiful wisteria is quite stunning.

But the inside is just as much a delight.

The spacious car park and convenient location, perfectly placed for the West Midlands, Staffordshire and Shropshire area, with a canopy covered eating area outside for those warmer months.

But no fear now that the cold, dreary weather is upon us, step inside and the decor is just as inviting. It has a warm comfortable feel matched by the service and attentiveness of the staff.

We popped in recently on a Saturday night and were lucky to get a table because its popularity has spread far and wide.

## IMPRESSIVE

Nestled in a corner, we tucked into a delightful three-course meal.

As there were four of us we chose one sharer – my daughter and I tucked into the Box Baked Camembert while the two men had the Duo of Pate and the Salt and Pepper Calamari and, needless to say, I had a little taster of each others.

Well you have to try as many dishes as possible, it's part of the job!

What was particularly impressive was that before we ordered our son-in-law explained to the waitress that he was lactose intolerant, at which she disappeared to the kitchen and returned with a large blue file.

In it were the ingredients of all the dishes of the menu

The Mermaid – just as attractive inside



Welcoming – General manager Chris Callow, with assistant manager Lizzie Johnston (right) and Emma Thomas

so there was no danger of him choosing something that would not suit him. No fuss, just reassurance that he could make the right choices.

For mains I went for my favourite, the Hunter's Chicken and it appears I am not alone as it is the pub's most popular dish, always on the menu no matter what the season.

My husband as usual went for the Rump Steak and my daughter for the Spicy Diablo pizza, it was so huge that she took some home to enjoy the next day. Having looking through the ingredients Duncan settled on the

Fish and Chips. All very good portions and beautifully served and just enough room for pudding.

Although fairly full by then, three of us were ready to tuck in.

My husband is not really a sweets man but when he saw what was on offer he changed his mind and went for the Melba Mallow Mess.

They do a nice coffee and mini pudding for £4.95 pud which is a great idea but my daughter and I teamed up again with the sharing Pudding Tasting Platter.

Well we like to share but I think I had the lion's share.

I finished mine off with a liqueur coffee – my pregnant daughter had already offered to drive. Be rude to say no.

So popular the Mermaid Christmas dinner menu is already sold out but there are still limited places for the Boxing Day meal (two courses £17.95, three courses £20.95. Call 01902 764896.

Or go to reservations opentable.co.uk

I drive past this Vintage Inn pub every day on my way to work and have always commented on how welcoming it looks. How right I was.

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## 42nd Street

New York City, 1933, and Peggy Sawyer, just off the bus from out-of-town hicksville, manages to miss the auditions for the dazzling new Broadway show but Peggy's impromptu dance routine is later spotted by the casting director, who decides to take a chance on her after all...

All the stops are pulled out as this classic tale of Broadway's Golden Age comes to London, directed and co-written by veteran Mark Bramble and featuring the showstoppers We're In The Money, Lullaby of Broadway, Shuffle Off To Buffalo, Dames, I Only Have Eyes For You and 42nd Street.

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## Single Women

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**FEMALE**, divorced, 58yrs old, looking for a nice man, non-smoker, clean-shaven. I enjoy walking, meals in/out, musical shows and much more. Text only replies. Mailbox: 5662627

**AMANDA**, 36yrs, attractive lady. Solvent and well educated and keen. Feminine figure with large breasts. Hoping to meet a broad-minded gent, any age for discreet relationship. I don't mind if you are married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3035 Box No: 429287

**PAMELA**, mature presentable lady, well educated, solvent, very young at heart. Hoping to meet presentable gent. Call me. Or text if you prefer. I promise to get back to you. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429329

**YAZ**, Asian lady, 32yrs, very slim and pretty. Hoping to meet a strong minded, dominant, resourceful man. Mature please 45+. Text Only. Box: 4177148

**LINDA**, late 50s lady, promises to call you back if you text or call. She's attractive and waiting to meet you. You must be 40+ with GSOH. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429325

**SOPHIE**, 46yrs, attractive professional lady with time on her hands. Hoping to meet a nice gent of any age, text fun, flirt, possible meeting. Text Only. Box: 4126579

**ATTRACTIVE** widowed lady, 70yrs but looks much much younger. GSOH, fun loving. WLTm man 67+ for loving tender relationship. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429327

**SARAH** black lady, works as a nurse. 48yrs young, hoping to meet a younger man for some fun. Let me be your cougar and dress me up in my uniform. Text Only. Box: 4166063

**429325JACKIE** 40, slim easygoing blonde, works too hard, needs sincere male to help live up her free time. Looks/status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429381

**MELANIE**, attractive lady, 38yrs, hoping to meet a nice chap, any age, for chats, non complicated times. Must have great sho, looks unimportant. Text Only. Box: 4037147

**JAN** 47, once bitten twice shy! Just looking for non complicated fun times. Attractive, discreet, OHAC, you won't be disappointed. Any age/looks/status. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429453

**DEBBIE** 38, fit size 12, discreet, WLTm intelligent man for fun relationship with no ties. Any age. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429417

I am a discreet married black lady who is hoping to meet a man of any colour for some daytime chats, maybe meet up, maybe just text to prolong the interest in our ways. Text Only. Box 4063856

**GEORGINA**, 46yrs, sophisticated professional lady (teacher), quite firm but kind! Interested in finding out more? I am interested to chat to you so call me today. Text Only. Box: 4151593

**MARIELLE**, 45yrs, curvy attractive lady, likes older men. I'm married so you must be discreet. Lets meet up, and make each other smile again. Call me and lets get to know each other. Tel: 0906 515 3039 Box: 426853

**ANGELA**, 48yrs, seeks no strings casual fun. I have my own house, car and am solvent. I'm busy with a firm figure. You must be open minded, age/status unimportant. Tel: 0906 515 3015 Box: 427633

**MARGARET** 42, busty chubby female WLTm Muslim men, Pakistani, Kurdish or Indian welcomed, daytime/evening, no strings. Text only replies. Mailbox: 5838907

**SARAH** 35, recently divorced, slim 5ft 7ins, pretty, seeks male up to 50yrs for meals out hopefully leading to more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429385

**KATIE** 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 419673

**TAMMY**, sincere mature lady, easy-going animal lover. Loves travel, eating out etc. Call me if you are interested in a chat. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429333

**JANE**, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715

**TAMIKA**, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3007 Box 422365

**RACHAEL**, 44yrs, loves life, varied interests, GSOH, kind and attractive. Seeks similar male of any age. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429323

**SOPHIA** young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399

**LISA**, 50yrs, curvy honey blonde lady. Loves life. Hoping to meet a kind gent of any age. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429321

**EMILY**, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 421375

**FEMALE** 67, smoker, enjoys music, TV, meals out in, looking for male 68-75 for friendship maybe more. Text only replies. Mailbox: 5877942

**SUE**, 44, country loving lady, tall, slim, looking for similar country gent to share adventures in the great outdoors with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429251

**HARRIETT** 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long legs and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. Tel: 0906 515 3031 Box 426205

**ELIZABETH**, 45, fed up with lonely nights! Blonde blue eyed, no children/ies, WLTm someone for cosy nights in and TLC. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429221

**CAROLINE**, 42yrs, well educated, sophisticated "some call me posh" married lady, looking for no strings midweek liaisons. Tel: 0906 515 3027 Box 427533

**SHARON**, 48, tall slim attractive, lives alone with no ties, love romanticising and WLTm man for good times together, maybe more. Any age. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429125

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**SAMANTHA**, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. Tel: 0906 515 3035 Box 425979

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**CARMEL**, open minded naughty lady seeks a broad minded strict man to unleash her wilder side. Age/looks unimportant but no time wasters please. Tel: 0906 515 3043 Box 426851

**TINA**, 58yrs, slim, passionate and kind. Loves eating out. Hoping to meet gent 55-63. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429167

**JANE**, 49yrs, own home, loves nature, artistic. Love to socialise. WLTm gent any age, must have GSOH. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429165

**DERBY** male, young 57, looking for uncared, unloved married woman looking for discreet adult fun 35-55. Txt me for a good time. Text only replies. Mailbox: 5321154

**MALE** seeks affectionate, tactile, no drama, down to earth woman for nights in/out and loads of cuddles. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418695

**ADVENTUROUS** 36 year old, slim, dark hair, has many interests, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417235

**MALE** would like to meet local female 50/60 for mutual friendship. I'm easygoing and have many interests. Text only replies. Mailbox: 5071056

**COLIN** 72, from Burntwood, looking for loving lady for days out, holidays and company. Text only replies. Mailbox: 4880436

**MALE**, 20s, seeks NSA fun with female. I love a laugh, age isn't important. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6042304

**MALE** 46, genuine and honest and very caring looking for a LTR with lady. Text only Replies. Mailbox: 5422168

**MALE** 20s, chilled out and happy in life looking for woman to share life with. Text only Replies. Mailbox: 6034839

**MALE**, 47, fit, slim, honest man, seeking nice, slim, honest lady for LTR, going out for drinks and having good times together. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427923

**MIKE**, male, 61, seeks black or Asian lady, any age for adult fun, maybe more. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6010228

**MALE**, late 60s, NSA, retired, 5ft9, slim build, enjoys holidays abroad, weekends away, travel, meals out. Looking to meet female, NSA, who enjoys similar interests, to share good times together, for friendship and maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428219

**TALL**, dark, attractive Shropshire male, 57, WLTm an attractive female, for discreet daytime fun and excitement. Any age or status. Can travel. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429301

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## 1 Family

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### Elderly & Disabled

**WREKIN STAIRLIFTS** reconditioned lifts from £799. New available. 01952 405397/07897 273617

## 2 Leisure Time

### Caravans Wanted

**CARAVAN WANTED.** Can collect asap. Caravan wanted. Call me on 07717090817

### Fishing

**CARP FISHING TACKLE** Full set, too much too list. Please ring for list £650 no offers. 07398 861529.

### holidays

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**READERS ARE REMINDED** to check with any Advertisers that their holiday costs are fully covered by a recognised bonding or insurance scheme.

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**FRIDAY DECEMBER 15TH**  
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## Book Fair

**BOOK FAIR** Kinver Community Centre, DY7 6ER, inc postcards. **Sunday 17th December**, Est 1979, Waverley. Also Bromsgrove Friday, Dec 29 and Jan 7. Next Antique Fair Dec 3rd. Home made refreshments. Call 0121 550 4381.

## 3 Home & Services

### Antiques

**LONG CASE** clock, art deco, dark wood. £500. 07526 684894.

### Furniture

**ARMCHAIR** fully reclining, tan sued leather, all unused, cost over £500, accept £165. 07787 636984. Private sale.

**PINE DRESSING TABLE** 4ft 6 long, with mirror, 8 drawers. Buyer collects. £40. 01902 676559.

### THERAPYPOSTURE ADJUSTABLE BED

3ft wide shallow divan. Cream damask headboard. Medium Reflex mattress, waterproof cover. Used once, as new. £450. 07772 182696.

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### In Your Garden

**GREENHOUSE** 8ft x 6ft, toughened glass, includes staging, buyer to dismantle and collect. £400. 07398 861529.

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**ITEMS FOR SALE**  
Mini Moto Motorbike £50.  
Four Builders Trestles £40  
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Mitre guillotine £25.  
01384 635233/07895 141564.

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Any gauge or age  
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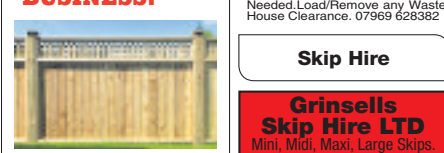
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2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree. Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

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**Animal Samaritans / Border Collie Rescue, Round House Hordley, Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 8HT.**

**01588 676106 or text ASMT4422 to 70070.**

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**GOLDEN LABRADOR** Pedigree puppies, dogs and bitches available. £300. 07938 598881.

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**YORKSHIRE TERRIER** Pup, nine weeks old, Mother and Father can be seen. £450. 07920 805120.

## 5 Business & Farming

### Business Opportunities

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## 6 Property

### Accommodation To Let

**NOTICE TO READERS** Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments/contracts.

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## 4 Pets & Animals

### Equestrian Corner

**ALL READERS** are advised to check if Horses, Donkeys or Ponies have the required Passport information.

### Guns & Dogs

**NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS** Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

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8

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**VOLVO S40**  
2007, 57 plate, 30,100 miles, silver, EW, AC, MoT July 2018, automatic, CL, CC. Genuine reason for sale. **£3,500.** 07538 651604.



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2014, 14,300 miles, 1.6 diesel, red, 5 door, parking sensors, alloys, lady owner. very economical. Exceptional condition inside and out. **£9,950** 07772 095031.

Cars Under £1500

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**AUTOMATIC**  
2000, 5-dr hatchback, pensioners car in excellent condition, any test. **£1,150 ono** Wolverhampton 07800 637961.

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## ESTATE

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Stourbridge 07810 528546.

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## Commercial Vehicles



**VAUXHALL COMBO 2000CDTI 1.3 VAN**

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07970 705466.

## Motorbikes



**AEON CROSSLAND 320CC**

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OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

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## alan reed cars

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## Local Information

**JUNE SIVITER (Deceased)**

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 10, Bourne Close Halesowen West Midlands B63 4ED, who died on 20/03/2017, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 23/02/2018, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice. **TALBOTS LAW LIMITED** Morgan House 25-27 Hagley Road Stourbridge DY8 1QH TS17936

**MARGARET WORTON (Deceased)**

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the above named, late of 30 George Road, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 4DE, who died on 10/10/2017, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 24/02/2018, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

**KingsGuard Legal**, Quay House, The Waterfront, Brierley Hill, West Midlands DY5 1XD. Ref: JH1856/WORTON

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## Personals

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**DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA** An invention, a book, music, lyrics and need help to get your idea off the ground? Call **07044 810093** All calls will receive a response.

### Personal

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Must be animal friendly and car driver.

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**TWO** bed house, Loughborough, back garden, looking for similar exchange, with garden, anywhere in Black Country. 07986 021441

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# Car retailer wins top national award

One of Halesowen's biggest and most successful used car retailers has been honoured at the industry's leading awards event.

Imperial Cars Supermarket in Dudley Road was named Used Car Supermarket of the Year by TV's Wheeler Dealer, Mike Brewer, at the Car Dealer Magazine Used Car Awards in London.

The coveted award, which saw the outlet triumph over an exceptionally strong field, recognises it for excellence across the board.

All nominees received a number of difficult mystery shopper visits before a panel of expert judges scored them against a demanding set of standards.

Imperial Car Supermarket – a thriving group with eight sites nationwide – passed with flying colours to take the accolade.

Presenting the award, Mike Brewer, said: "When it comes to managing a lot of stock, cars of all shapes and colours and a site that can be measured in acres rather than metres, it can be difficult to keep customers happy.

"Imperial Cars certainly have that covered, though. They shone in every single round of mystery shopping and truly deserve the award."

Speaking afterwards, Neil Smith, Operations Director at Imperial Cars, said: "We are absolutely delighted to have won this award.

"As a business, we place great value on our excellent reputation and work incredibly hard to ensure we offer the very highest standards of customer care across all areas. This award shows we are on the right track."

Imperial Cars has built an excellent



reputation as a reliable and trustworthy retailer with its emphasis firmly on customer service. Each of the group's large sites stocks hundreds of used cars of all makes

and models and all come with an HPI check certificate, DVLA Online Registration, warranted mileage and 3 months RAC Warranty. In addition, as an RAC Approved

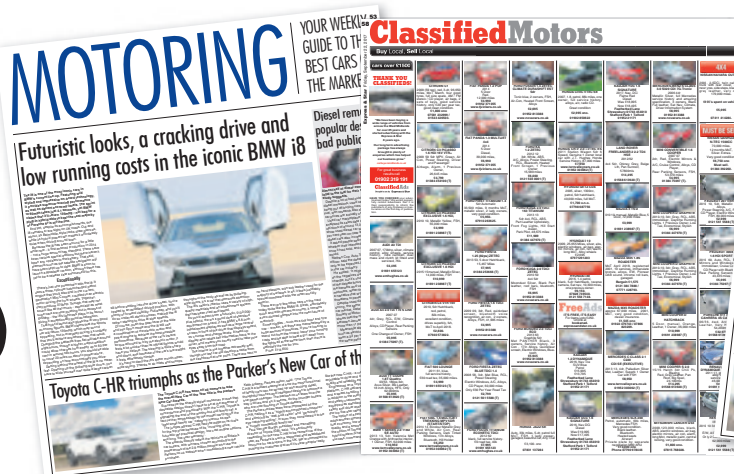
outlet, all cars stocked undergo a series of stringent checks, carried out by fully-qualified technicians, for maximum peace of mind. In addition to the cars at its Halesowen

site, the group's entire range of thousands of quality assured pre-owned vehicles can be searched online at [www.imperialcarsupermarkets.co.uk](http://www.imperialcarsupermarkets.co.uk)



EVERY  
FRIDAY!

## New Car?



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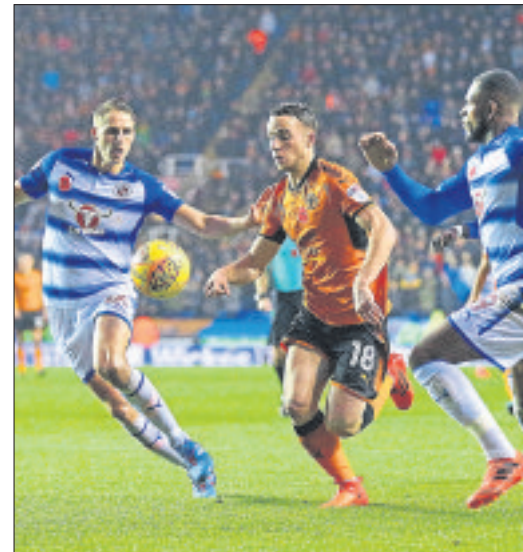




With Wales teammates, from left, Andy King, Johnny Williams and Sam Vokes



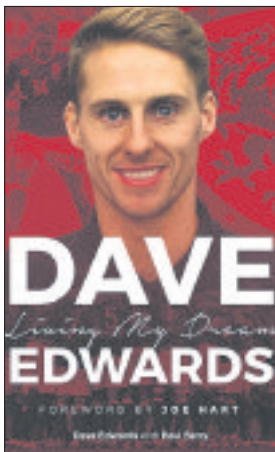
Edwards in action at his first club Shrewsbury



Playing for new club Reading against former team Wolves



Dave Edwards spent nearly a decade at Wolves



The Living the Dream book



Dave as a football-mad schoolboy

# New chapter as Wolves old boy lives the dream

## SPORTING FEATURE

By Tom Oakley

**"Dave is always very interesting and thoughtful with his opinions, and is always happy to front up and face the media and supporters through the good times and the bad."**

**HE'S made more than 400 professional appearances and helped Wales reach the semi-finals of Euro 2016.**

Now, Wolves favourite Dave Edwards has put pen to paper to document his story and road in his new book, *Living My Dream*.

It all began in rural Shropshire for the former Molineux midfielder, who says he was just a "farm boy" in Shrewsbury when he first kicked a ball.

Now, the 31-year-old has enjoyed a career in which he has been praised by some of the game's greats, with Real Madrid and Wales star Gareth Bale hailing his book "a great read".

All of Edwards' royalties from the book sales, released this month, will go to the Midlands-based Little Rascals Foundation.

Edwards, who recently left Wolves for Reading after nine years in the old gold and black, said: "Being a footballer is a privileged existence – it is one I have never taken for granted and one which has given me some unbelievable experiences."

### Insight

"Hopefully this book will give people an insight into what it means for a farm boy from Shrewsbury to follow his dream, making it both to the Premier League and being part of a Wales squad which reached the semi-finals at their first major tournament in 58 years."

The footballer started his career in the youth set-up at Shrewsbury Town in 1996 where he made more than 100 appearances. After a season at Luton, he was snapped up by then Wolves boss Mick McCarthy in 2008.

*Living My Dream* is described as a "frank and fascinating story" – outlining what it took for Edwards to achieve his life's ambition.

It describes how his dedication and commitment to the game he loves has enabled him to enjoy a successful 16-year career, spanning the top five English divisions from the Conference to the Premier League.

Bale, who played with Edwards at the Euro 2016 competition in France last year, is among the footballers to back the book.

He said: "A fantastic behind-the-scenes insight of

what it was like in the Welsh camp at Euro 2016. A special time and a great read."

Woven into the story of his club career, *Living My Dream* is also a behind-the-scenes account of Dave's brave fightback, after a serious injury in January 2016, to make the starting line-up in Wales' opening game in Bordeaux at that summer's European Championships.

He is the first player from the Welsh squad to reveal just what it was like for a player cocooned inside the team bubble at the Euros. He reveals how the Welsh players thrived on and forged an untouchable team spirit.

It tells the story of a family man, who feels fortunate and privileged to have enjoyed the career he has – a "fascinating" insight into the day-to-day life of a professional footballer, according to England goalkeeper Joe Hart and "best mate", who wrote the book's foreword.

Hart said: "Dave Edwards has been one of my best mates in football, all the way through my career and this book offers some great behind-the-scenes insight into what it is like for a player at a major tournament, and some of the secrets behind Wales' spectacular success."

The book, written with the help of Wolves' head of media Paul Berry, is set to be released this month.

It has been published by St Davids Press, [www.st-davids-press.wales](http://www.st-davids-press.wales)

Berry said it was a privilege to work with Edwards. "Like so many football fans, I thought the story of Wales at Euro 2016, their first major tournament for 58 years, was a fantastic one to follow," he said.

"It was made even more interesting having worked with Dave for so many years at Wolves, as well as Wayne Hennessey and Sam Vokes."

All three of those players were great to work with, and the sort of characters whom you always want to be successful. The further the tournament went on, the more I thought that the idea of a book telling the behind-the-scenes story would be one which would appeal to all football fans."

After Edwards returned from France, over a spell of about six months, him and Paul had regular conversations at the training ground to put together an account of life at Euro 2016.

This included chats about the rest of his career leading up to the tournament, including his recovery from the injury which for a time put his participation in doubt.

### Foundation

He added: "Dave is one of those footballers who is always very interesting and thoughtful with his opinions, and is always happy to front up and face the media and supporters through the good times and the bad."

"He had also kept a journal during the tournament, which provided a really good foundation for that section of the book."

"For me it was a privilege to listen to Dave talk so openly and honestly about life as a professional footballer, and that journey through so many ups and downs to turning out on the biggest stage of all at the European Championships."

"Along with the behind-the-scenes account of what it was like for the Welsh squad at Euro 2016, there are several chapters devoted to Dave's club career with both Shrewsbury and Wolves, and hopefully plenty of stories which fans will enjoy reading."

"It was a fascinating insight into the life of someone whom, by his own admission, made the absolute most out of the talent at his disposal and has, as the title suggests, lived his dream!"

## Fundraising boxing nights a real winner

CHARITY boxing nights in Wolverhampton have proved a real knockout with more than £2,000 being raised.

Kaos Kickboxing coach Dylan Fitzpatrick has organised the events to raise money for the Deanesley ward at New Cross Hospital. Five such events have been held so far, the latest in November, featuring 11 bouts, and more are planned next year.

Dylan began the nights in memory of his late grandmother Mary Scott, who died of cancer at the age of 91 two years ago, before she was due to be admitted to the ward. However he has since set out to raise as much as he can for the staff.

Kaos Kickboxing operates from a church hall, in Owen Road, Wolverhampton. Fight nights are staged at Jacks Bar, in Frederick Street.

The next fundraiser is on March 24. Sign up nights are on January 2 and 22. To register, or for tickets, contact [kaoskickboxing@hotmail.com](mailto:kaoskickboxing@hotmail.com) or call 07772 658708.

## Pathway to success for handball girls

GIRLS' handball is enjoying a boom with the formation of a new club thanks to funding from Cameron Homes. The club, based at Chase Terrace Technology College in Burntwood, will provide 13-to-17-year-old girls a pathway to develop from a beginner to playing for another of the clubs Cameron support – Cannock Olympia and Sutton Coldfield-based side B73.

Nenad Popovic, the Midlands Academy manager for England Handball and former head of PE at Cardinal Griffin School, Cannock, said: "We had a good boys' handball team and girls wanted to play. They initially trained with the boys before playing themselves and they went on to win the under-16s National Schools Championships."

"Cameron have given us £45,000 over three years to develop girls handball and we now have 15 schools involved, and recently had our finals at Aldersley Stadium where 1,000 players were involved."

Cannock Olympia and B73 are expected to benefit from the new club. Anyone interested can email [scoreuk@gmail.com](mailto:scoreuk@gmail.com)

## Sports groups open to share of cashpot

YOUNG sporting individuals and clubs can win a share of more than £600,000 in the Healthy Communities Scheme run by Persimmon Homes.

The programme was launched in May and closes at the end of December. It is part of a national initiative to give away cash to sports groups and individuals. A host of regional prizes of £750 are up for grabs every month, with amateur sports teams and individuals aged 21 years and under eligible. The money is to be spent on sports kit, equipment, coaching or facilities.

A shortlist of 30 will be drawn up in January from all the entries nationwide. They will go forward to a national final to be determined by public vote. The winning club or individual will receive £200,000 with £50,000 each going to two runners-up.

Persimmon Homes West Midlands, which has its headquarters in Wolverhampton, has chosen individuals and clubs from its region, including Gornal Athletic Mini Minor Kickers and a Stourbridge archer.

To enter visit [www.persimmonhomes.com/charity](http://www.persimmonhomes.com/charity)





SPORTS DESK 01902 319531

CHRON.SPORT@EXPRESSANDSTAR.CO.UK

## Byfield aims to be fast on his feet again

SUPER featherweight Les Byfield is finding his quick feet once more as he targets an eighth consecutive professional boxing victory.

Byfield takes on former sparring partner Andy Harris at Walsall FC's Stadium Suite on Sunday and has been putting in extra training to bring back his lightning-quick feet he was so well known for on the amateur scene.

The 30-year-old from Netherton, fights Harris in his first six-round bout as part of BCB Promotions' 'Jingle All The Way' event. Byfield knows what a tough customer 'Thunder' is from their hours of sparring and hopes his high work-rate will carry him through.

"I know Andy is a very good boxer and I sparred with him when I first went pro so I am expecting this to be a very tough fight," Byfield said. "With him being a little bit heavier than me I am guessing it will go the distance."

"Before I went pro, one of my biggest attributes was that I had really fast feet so I have been working a lot to try and get those back."

Jingle All The Way also features Walsall's Rachel Ball who makes her professional debut at the top of the bill. The Aldridge featherweight turns over from kickboxing where she achieved world honours. She is joined by Birmingham welterweight Kane Baker and Ledbury super lightweight Alex Florence.

Standard tickets are £35 and VIP tickets at £60 for tables of 10, with a hot Christmas buffet. Call the boxers or Walsall FC box office on 01922 651414/416.

## Glassboys hit road for Trophy clash

STOURBRIDGE travel to Leamington for the FA Trophy First Round proper on Saturday – and are looking to put on a coach for supporters.

The coach will run from the War Memorial Ground at 12.30pm, subject to demand. Seats can be booked by contacting Jim McComish on 07966 568767 after 5pm. Fare is £10, or £5 for under 16s. Bookings must be made by 6pm today (Thursday).

Saturday's league game with Farsley Celtic was called off. Meanwhile, a special DVD from last season's FA Cup run is available – just in time for Christmas.

The Glassboys made the third round proper, beating Northampton Town before losing to Wycombe Wanderers.

Fans can now relive the two historic fixtures against league opposition, with both games featuring in full. The DVDs, put together by Black Country Video, are in stock at the club shop, priced £9.95.

Meanwhile Dan Scarr, who scored in the third round tie at Wycombe, will spend the rest of the season on loan at the Chairboys from Birmingham City.

The 22-year-old defender joined Blues in January and has made 13 appearances for the League Two side since joining on loan in August.

## Commitment to sport goes platinum



Windsor High School sports leaders

A HALESOWEN school has gone platinum in its commitment to developing pupils in competitive sports.

Windsor High School and Sixth Form became one of the first in England to win the new national award.

It was among 104 schools nationwide to receive the special School Games Platinum Award, part of the School Games Mark, a government-led awards scheme launched

in 2012 and administered the Youth Sport Trust charity. This year, there were close to 9,000 applicants.

Its aim is to reward schools for a commitment to the development of competition across schools and into the community.

The Platinum Award is the fourth level and was only introduced this year to celebrate schools who had shown consistently high-levels of en-

thusiasm and commitment to school sport. Applications are only open to those schools who achieved five successive gold awards.

Platinum Awards are valid for two years. Headteacher Stephen Lancham said: "We are delighted that we have received the Platinum Award as a result of many years of successful commitment to school sport and out of hours activities for our students."

# INTERNATIONAL JOINS EXODUS

THERE is an Exodus at Halesowen Town FC – but without any players leaving.

Boss John Hill has bolstered the ranks with two new signings – one of them an international player.

Hill has strengthened the Yeltz back line with the signing of 6ft 5ins ex-Glassboy Exodus Geohaghton and brought in Montserrat player Spencer Weir-Daley to The Grove.

Geohaghton, who spent time in his youth at West Bromwich Albion, has Football League experience with Peterborough United, as well as with loan spells at Rotherham United, Shrewsbury Town and Port Vale.

Outside the League, he has played for Sutton Coldfield, Bromsgrove, Redditch and Kettering, as well as Barnet, Darlington, Dagenham & Redbridge and Mansfield Town, where he won the Conference title in 2012.

### Travelled

The much-travelled player has been at Worcester City, Braintree, Solihull Moors and Nuneaton Town, later representing Whitehawk, Stourbridge, Torquay United and Nuneaton Town as a player-coach.

Weir-Daley, who has two international appearances, has scored 13 times in 21 games for Redditch United this season.

Starting his career at Nottingham Forest, the 32-year-old has also played for Notts County, AFC Telford, Boston United, Corby Town, Kettering Town and Hednesford Town before signing for Redditch in July.

During his league career, has made 350-plus appearances in all, scoring more than 140 goals.

Weir-Daley will challenge John McAtee and newcomer Ethan Jones, who joined from Southport, for a starting place in the Yeltz team.

Saturday's game against Nantwich Town was called off and has yet to be rearranged. On Saturday Yeltz visit Ashton United before two home games against Derbyshire opposition over the festive period, Mickleover Sports on Boxing Day and Buxton on December 30.

## Ally pally with Albion royalty



Ally Robertson with John Wile, Bryan Robson, Cyrille Regis, Johnny Giles, Tony Brown and Joe Mayo

ALBION stars from the 1970s and 80s glory days turned up at The Hawthorns to support Ally Robertson's book launch.

Former England captain Bryan Robson, Robertson's old manager Johnny Giles, legendary striker Cyrille Regis, all-time record scorer Tony Brown, centre-back partner John Wile and former team-mate Joe Mayo all turned out. The Baggies royalty mingled with 100 sup-

porters, signed books, and answered questions about the no-nonsense defender who is second on Albion's all-time appearance list.

It marked the launch of the biography: Thou Shalt Not Pass: The Ally Robertson Story. "I've never been on the front of anything, I've always been at the back, I've never won anything, so I'm just surprised anybody would want to read it!" he said.

## Injury blow for Albion Women star

A TEENAGE footballer who spent three days in hospital after dislocating her knee for Albion Women is unsure when she'll return to action.

Brodie Vincze, a highly-rated 16-year-old central midfielder who has had trials for England, sustained the injury during a 7-0 defeat to Huddersfield Town Ladies in the second round of the FA Women's Cup.

Play was halted for more than two hours while an ambulance arrived after her studs got caught in the turf just three minutes into the game.

"It's still painful," admitted the teenager from Halesowen. "I've had to get signed off from college (in Solihull) and hopefully I'll be back by late January."

"I'm in a brace and on crutches, I'm not sure when I'll be walking properly again because I can't put any weight on it." Vincze has been at Albion since she was 10, but was promoted from the under-16s to the senior team in the summer by new manager Louis Sowe.

She skipped the development team altogether and now plies her trade in the Premier League Northern Division – the third tier of senior women's football.

Albion Women are currently 10th in the 12-strong Premier North Division. Their next game is at Leicester City on Sunday.

## Darters kept apart in draw of the worlds

TIPTON duo Scott Baker and Jamie Hughes are on opposite sides of the draw for the 2018 BDO World Championship.

It means the Black Country pair can't meet until at least the semi-finals at Lakeside, Frimley Green.

Debutant Baker faces Belgium's Andy Beutens in a first-to-three-sets tie. Third seed Hughes, twice a semi-finalist, plays the winner of a preliminary round tie, Canada's David Cameron or German open qualifier Michael Unterbuchner.

Last weekend, Hughes reached the semi-finals of the BDO Finder Masters in Egmond aan Zee, Holland. Danny Noppert won the tournament.

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